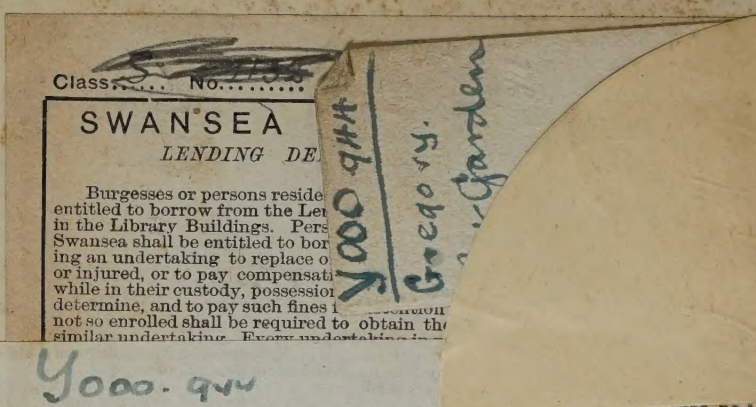

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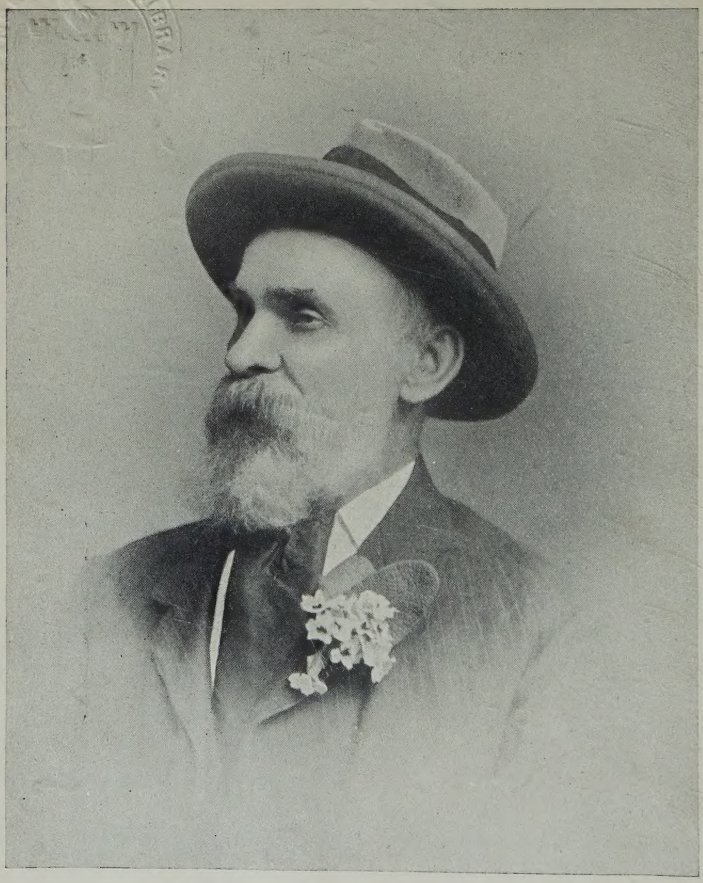

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SWANSEA PUBLIC LIBRARY

My Garden

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN GREGORY

WITH AN APPRECIATION
BY
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APPRECIATION.

JOHN GREGORY was born on the 14th of June, 1831, at Bideford, in Devon. His father was a merchant's clerk, and a man of considerable natural ability and thought, and of a deeply religious turn of mind. For fifty years he was a local preacher in connection with the Wesleyan Methodists, and a tablet to his memory was erected in the chapel where he usually officiated. His mother was the daughter of a Hartland peasant. The boy had but little schooling. At the age of eleven he was apprenticed to a shoemaker for the term of seven years, and whilst serving his time became acquainted with Edward Capern, a postman, who subsequently made a considerable reputation as a poet. Young Gregory now began to pave his way, and, with a brave heart, set out in pursuit of knowledge. After his hours of weary work he devoted what leisure he had to study, but he regarded all books as foot-notes to the book of Nature. His apprenticeship served, Gregory came to Bristol, but in a few months lack of work drove him home again, where he continued to reside until 1852. In that year he

left Bideford for good, and four years later, after living at Tenby, Aberavon and Swansea, again returned to Bristol. In 1856 he married, and went to reside at Cardiff, at which place he stayed until 1860. Then for the third time he came to Bristol, and has since remained faithful to the city of his choice. Many years ago, through the kindness of the Rev. J. M. Wilson (now Canon of Worcester), then Head Master of Clifton College, he was appointed boot repairer to the school, and this work he still performs.

Although Gregory practised verse-making while yet a child, it was not until he was forty years of age that he was able to publish his first batch of verses *Idyls of Labour*. Nothing can so well describe his feelings at the time as the pathetic little preface to the volume. "All things in Nature," says he, "have their preface. The baby bud is the herald of the full-blown rose. The skylark's song is evangeled by a blissful fluttering of its pinions, and the birth of a child by the groan of maternity. So, courteous reader, with parental emotion I would say, this book is the consummation of a working-man's desire. I have chased it in and about the vale of tears and laughter, as urchins pursue summer butterflies. In the ever-green kingdom of poesy I have caressed the pleasant fancy. The victory is won. It is mine. But, oh, how late; 'tis the eve

of my existence; the shadows are approaching; I shall soon be gone. How long will my children loiter behind me? As a fond shepherd in the evening hour collects his scattered flock, so to the bondage of this fair fold have I gathered my wanderers, and with the hearty hope that they may sing their passage to the haven of your indulgent care."

This slight book won for him some recognition and the respect of a few well-known scholars. In 1877 *Song Streams* appeared, with another charming preface. Latterly prefaces have fallen into sad neglect. Once they were considered indispensable, for by them the authors advertised their work. To-day, if they are written at all, they are almost sure to be worse than the matter that follows. But John Gregory's are as delightful as his poems. Take the following: "By the dim light of a few bottled glow-worms I once saw a countryman reading the Bible. This anecdote I pen that you may comprehend the extreme difficulty a toil-drudge has to overcome ere he accomplishes the feat of launching into the flood of literature such a volume as this. Hope not then to find within the compass of my waif-fold the wonders of poesy. Yet here shall you discover flowers you will not disdain, and among the leaves thoughts that shall not be forgotten. Out on the

sea of Time I have floated my waifs away, as urchins sail paper boats. Here have I again gathered them in; and unto the grace of your indulgence, that they may not with the author soon pass down to greater obscurity, I respectfully commend them."

Such a preface as this makes one regret that he wrote the proem for *Murmurs and Melodies* in verse. This work was published in 1884, and is the last volume that he has produced. But the three books named in no way represent the whole of his output, for he has issued many poems singly, and a collection of these, together with his contributions to daily and weekly journals, would fill a good-sized volume.

And all this in spite of forty years in factory and workshop. But the spirit of song is not allowed to interfere with the social and political work of the citizen. While John Gregory toils and sings he also strives, by work on committees, trades' councils, and on the platform, to ameliorate the lot of his fellow-toilers. Indeed, few men during the last forty years have laboured more conscientiously and honestly on behalf of suffering humanity.

Now and again we come upon men who appear to stand completely outside the class among which they work and live. Such a position was occupied

by Bloomfield, the farmer's boy, who, singing the experiences of his own people, painting their lives and describing their environment with fidelity and vigour, secured for himself immediate recognition and a certain amount of fame. Again, John Clare, a sickly boy reared on an ill-drained plain, with water-porridge and potatoes as his staple diet, the victim of ague, and the tender of sheep and geese at the age of seven, twenty years later sang of the English peasant in his work and play, his youth and age, his joy and sorrow, and the *Quarterly Review* made him popular. And again, Gerald Massey, a toiler at eight in a silk mill, at twenty-one moved a nation with his pen. These were common men, but their eyes and tongues were touched with the finger of God. It was their lot to be born on a mighty river, down which thousands of their order were drifting, they themselves forming no part of it. Their souls seemed immediately to ascend and hover above the surging mass as it sped along. They watched on high, and voiced the lives of those beneath them. Their eyes saw what their brethren saw not, and their tongues spake a language to the others mysterious. Those on the river were of the dead; the watchers were of the living. And to-day John Gregory ranges himself with the watchers, and is of the living. His eyes and tongue have been touched

with the finger that touched the eyes and tongues of Bloomfield, of Clare, and of Massey. Outside his class and above the vortex of misery that whirls beneath him, he sings

> Melodies sweet,
> To merry music tuned, ...
> Followed by murmurs sad . . .
> . . . . . as the voice
> Of the heart-broken poor.

They are a part and portion of his life, and out of his heart they have flown forth.

Near two-score years have passed since the first shallop set sail, but how many have never even heard its name or that of its builder! There are always a few who immediately recognise worth, no matter whence it may appear, and that Gregory has a small circle of admirers is only to be expected. That many know him and neglect him is to be deplored; but in spite of all indifference his heart pours forth its songs. He sings, rather than creates, imaginative poems, and therefore do I call him singer instead of poet. Verse to him is a vehicle to express his deepest convictions and inmost thoughts. His purpose is to help the helpless, give pleasure to the sorrowful, inspire the hopeless; and therefore do we find many of his pieces indignant protests against the wrongs of suffering humanity, manly utterances against power harshly used. But ever mingled with the

protests are noble appeals to the higher nature of the oppressors. The cry is for justice, never revenge. The better passions are evoked, not the baser.

When a sensitive man sees wrongs he also feels them, but for one of this nature who cries for justice a thousand clamour for vengeance. Once enlighten a slave, his senses are quickened and his tortures increased a thousandfold. And then the struggle begins. He either sinks in the whirlpool, unbridles his passions, or rises victorious over despair and vice. Gregory is one of those who has risen glorified.

"How shall I live?" he cries.

> How shall I live
> So that I may grow beautiful? I long
> For things that will to me their beauty give,
> And not for that which doth my being wrong.
>
> Oh, for a light!
> That I may find what path I ought to tread
> Forth from the darkness of this nether night
> To the high dwelling of the great undead!

This passionate cry, although keeping close to the life of man, has something more in it. It is a yearning for the ideal, a striving for a far-off gleam. Far, far through the mists of ignorance and bigotry he has seen, dimly perhaps, but none the less certainly, the vision of the goddess who

alone can solve the pathetic mystery of the world, and to her he cries with all the yearning of his soul:—

I want thee, Truth! I want thee, thou grand daughter
Of the great God, that doth in all things dwell—
In earth or heaven, in air or fire or water—
I want to find thee, Truth! Where is thy cell?

Out of my soul I would with song salute thee.
By the true love I gave thee in my youth,
I long to sing thy everlasting beauty;
I want to be thy troubadour, O Truth!

I yearn in battle to assert thy grandeur;
I aim to grasp thy adamantine spear,
That I might drive it through the tongue of Slander,
So of her malice thou shalt have no fear.

These words are not the words of a destroyer, but of a builder. They are not the words of one "with hidden knife behind," but rather of one who wishes to combat in the light of day beneath the ray of Heaven. Before a lesson can be taught a lesson must be learned. Knowledge must be gained before a man can speak words of wisdom; and oftentimes before that knowledge is gained many years of martyrdom have to be endured. Every truth may cost a tear, and the cup must be drained to the dregs before the goal be won. The altar of Truth is not set up in the valley's mire, but on the mountain-top. And knowing

this, Gregory cries as surely he pursues his quest:—

> Lead me, I pray, to thy eternal altar,
> And let me trim my torch, that I may show
> Its blessed beams unto the feet that falter,
> And a safe path to where thy pure streams flow.

The pursuit has led him, as it has led many others, to Nature, and well has he learned his lesson of her. And this is remarkable, considering the stifling years he has spent in factory and workshop. One would imagine him to have always lived in his native Devon, instead of having spent the better portion of his life in the turmoil of a city. Cities give only imperfect play to the human senses. We go to Nature to save ourselves from suffocation. Our eyes want more than streets and houses can give them. They need the trees and the flowers, the golden cornfield, the ruddy clover, the emerald grass blades, the sea and the purling rill. These things belong to the oldest of faiths, the most ancient of religions, and this religion still has its votaries, and John Gregory is one of them. His great love of Nature, and his susceptibility to external surroundings is apparent in all his work. Wordsworth was the first poet to raise the love of Nature into a worship; and Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Swinburne and Morris became worshippers at her shrine. Gregory too kneels humbly a short

way off and adores. He has acquired the rare habit of observation, which is the basis of every artist's power. His eye embraces every form of Nature within its range, and their presence cause his whole being to vibrate like an Æolian lyre, whose strings are swept by the odorous southern wind. His "great, glad, aboriginal instincts," as Emerson calls them, enable him to lift up his eyes and see the whole world burning with deity. Everything that is touched with the hand of Nature becomes his companion. The seasons with their thousand changes, their bleak sides and their shining hours, the song of birds, the whisper of winds, the day with its single eye, and the night with its million stars have been to him delightful studies and charming friends. He has bathed in their lights and shades, and has won from them their silent and eloquent promises. Every object has taught its lesson, has whispered its wisdom, has lavished its joy, has convulsed with its pain, and its message, whether of pleasure or sorrow, has always been charged with truth.

And only once do we find Gregory's faith in Nature fail him, and that is when he is brought face to face with the awful misery following in the wake of frost.

> Oh, cruel frost, away!
> Thou art not welcome to the poor,

he sobs; and because it is a toil destroyer, bringing with it want, suffering, and death, he gives it not right welcome. Frost is the usher to poverty—the enemy of love. "Love flies out of the window when poverty knocks at the door." But as soon as Gregory is faced with the proverb he refuses to admit it as an axiom; his faith revives, and then he argues—

'Tis not always so.
There are many trusting hearts
That love each other best in woe,
And will not let their angel go
When Fortune's smile departs.
Then welcome be the snow,
Her follower, the frost,
And all that heaven doth bestow.

As faith returns so returns wisdom, and Gregory forgives even the frost, for he knows there beats beneath the frozen ground the throbbing life of spring—spring, with its music, its light, its laughter, and its flowers. Divine to him is Mary's month, the month

When happy thoughts grow strong
As angels' arms, that bear our souls afar
To Beauty's feast of flowers, love, and song,
And Mercy's banquet on a sin-damned star.

Out from the city and the murky shop the minstrel comes, and wanders into the fields to catch the sunshine. Then loudly to his brethren doth he call to share the splendour with him:—

> Come, careworn souls, from the sin-haunted town,
> And learn to love the glorious haunts of health,
> The dark-green wood, the dell and lofty down,
> Come out and see the Great Creator's wealth!

But there are people who cannot see the green woods even when they face them—people on whom the Great Creator makes very little impression. Their lives are too sordid; their hope is not in Nature, their love is not the Lady May. They feel not April's death nor May's glad birth. They cannot see the fruitful earth bound up at morning's touch to greet her lover at the eastern gate. But because they cannot see it, it is none the less real. Now and then Giotto looks up from his sheepfold and Burns from his furrow, and as they, so John Gregory looks up from his last. And then he sings to us his vision. The sun shines on him, that is sufficient: all is beautiful; the earth is alive with melody and colour.

> The rapid swallow, screaming with delight,
> Darts o'er the shining flood; the cuckoo calls;
> The orchard trees are draped with banners white,
> And song-birds revel in their verdant halls.

And the singer revels there with them, and carols his lay like a good son of Devon, pleasing himself, if not the vulgar herd; gathering beauties, if not fame. And after all, says he, what is fame but

The tinkle of a bell
Suspended in a crumbling tower
Of a strange realm, 'twixt heaven and hell,
Where care has blighted every flower.

* * * *

Fame is not worth the hunter's pains
Until he dies, then eager friends
Will crown his ghost to make amends.

A life like John Gregory's, instinct with passion, perseverance, and manly hope, can afford to treat Fame to this splendid scoff.

There is a warmth, a light, a love in his thought that makes it luminous and true, and there is also that piercing below the surface of phenomena to the living soul that makes it a reality.

From this thoroughness spring the faults and beauties of Gregory's work, and behind everything stands a strong human personality.

But, after all, perhaps his greatest poem is his life.

E. J. WATSON.

January, 1907.

PREFACE.

So to this home in which I shall abide
Even when of me it is said, "He died,"
You, for some pleasure you expect to win,
Open the dainty door. To greet you in,
Hither I am come forth. I am right glad
For any strange offspring, in print dresses clad,
With you awhile to speak. Forth in their front
I, as a sponsor at a holy font,
Here in your presence stand. For their dear sake,
Thus unto you I my obedience make,
Wrapt in a rôle of rhyme. I will not dare
Ape a poor showman at a village fair
By trumpeting their praise. When that you see
Them with your sight, you may commune with me;
For I in them shall live. While that you hear
The thoughts they lift, I shall to you appear,
So that you may me know. When I am gone
Out of the world, they will to you sing on,
As through my mind they sang. Melodies sweet,
To merry music tuned, you here shall meet,
Followed by Murmurs sad. It is my choice
That they unto you should be as the voice
Of the heartbroken poor. If one you scorn,
Please do remember that it was not born
Your special taste to please. They are a part
And portion of my life. Out of my heart
Thus far they have flown forth. Hidden from Death,
Here in them I shall live. You breathe my breath
While that on them you pore. Lend me your hand,
And let me lead you where my darlings stand
Up in your sight to sing.

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POEMS.

MY GARDEN.

I HAVE within this world of ours
A little garden filled with flowers,
Which are not as the flowers that die
When autumn clouds invade the sky.
To mine, because they wear a charm,
The winter winds shall bring no harm;
They shall not with the spring-gems fade,
  Nor perish in the summer flame.
In heat or cold, in light or shade,
  My garden strange is still the same:
For all the flowers within it found
Were born to bloom the whole year round.

Fair is my garden to behold,
  With borders trimmed, and portals neat,
Whereon the name is writ in gold;
  And all the flowers within are sweet—
So sweet to me because I know
It was my love that bade them blow;
And some of them came out with pain
  So often in the midnight hours,
That my warm tears did sadly rain
  Upon them; but the sweetest flowers
Of all that I have raised for love,
Are those that I have wept above.

If in the night alone you sit,
  Looking the tender leaves among,
There you may see my fancies flit,
  And you may hear that mystic song
I heard the passion spirits sing
When that my flowers were opening;
And if thy thoughts to their embrace
  Thou dost consign, then shalt thou say,
"This garden is a haunted place.
  Fear not, but let thy fancies play
With mine, good friend: small is thy need,
My garden is the book you read."

THE POET'S CHILD.

As a wild bird on a tree,
  So the Poet sendeth
Forth his soul in melody,
And no man hath eyes to see
  Where its journey endeth.

O'er the world from mind to mind,
  In its beauty bounding,
When no hunter's eyes may find
Him that sang to humankind,
  Song shall have its sounding.

As the wild winds in their run
  All the round world over,
So a song to music spun,
Though it soars not to the sun,
  Shall not beg a lover.

Waifs of the great human throng
  In their hearts will cherish,
For its good, the vagrant song,
And their love shall make it strong:
  How then can it perish?

Though the sages heed it not,
  Though the critics curse it,
Lost! may never be its lot,
While a toiler in a cot
  Opes his heart to nurse it!

Who will say the thought is wild?
  When the bard lies breathless,
Someone, from their care beguiled,
Will caress the Poet's Child:
  So it shall be deathless!

POETS.

As the swallows are to summer, as the bells are to the steeple,
As the stars are to the heaven, as the flowers are to the sod,
Their eyes, and tongues, and voices, so are poets to the people,
The tongues of human passions and interpreters of God!

In the temple of creation, to rehearse the praise of Beauty,
The service of Soul Sorrow, and the majesty of Love,
It hath been through all the ages the true poet's joy and duty,
As unto the angel singers it is in the world above.

What is there save sorrow for the singer poor and lowly?
There is flattery and praise, either to scorn or store;
Other good unto him is a joy that cometh slowly;
Let my light be hidden, let my song be heard no more.

Shall I sing for praise? Ah! nay, I have sung for pleasure,
As a lark ascending to the sun in summer sings;
When that I am dead, upon my grave o'ertip the measure:
For that time my spirit mute shall wait with folded wings.

SLEEP.

How wonderful is Sleep; I have lain dead
  Thousands of nights in my Creator's hand
Since I began my journey to that bed
  From which I shall arise at His command,
When Death shall snap the scythe of Time in twain,
And all the dead shall burst dull Slumber's chain.

How merciful is Sleep to the poor slave
  That does not own a life to save or spend.
In all his thorny pathway to the grave
  He will not meet with a more welcome friend
Than Death's balm-laden bride. Sleep lifts the load
From his sad heart, and breaks Oppression's goad.

How bold is Sleep, that dost divest a king
  Of dignity, distinction, might, and all
That robe of greatness Fate delights to fling
  Around a royal clod. When blessings fall
Direct from heaven like sleep, light, rain, or air,
Distinction dies, and all receive their share.

How pitiful is Sleep! She does not scorn
  The meanest beggar on a couch of straw,
Nor a poor culprit in his cell forlorn.
  Sleep doth administer the kindest law
Of human nature. See! the hangman's prey
Sleeps close to Death, and Hope is far away.

How kind is sleep! There was a wretch that kept
  Wailing for bread near Fortune's bolted gate.
Sleep brought her bread from heaven, and she slept,
  Forgetful of her want and the world's hate
Of poverty, that weeps like a foul sore,
Where one grow's rich by making thousands poor.

What is this life to which we daily rise
  From the soft arms of slumber? Life should be
The fortune of a soul that never dies.
  But in the hour when Sleep comes down to me,
I see Life's lamp turned low, by nothing less
Than God's economy and Sleep's caress.

A SUMMER IDYL.

April is gone! 'Twas midnight when she crept
Out from the tent of Time, with a sad sigh,
To kiss her darling daisies while they slept
On a green carpet 'neath the summer sky.

April is past! but she has made the print
Of angel footsteps in her happy way.
April is dead! but she has left a mint
Of wealth and glory for her daughter May.

Wake! Beauty, wake! Lo! from her starry couch,
In fresh spring robes, with new-born joy elate,
The fruitful earth bounds up at morning's touch
To greet her lover at the eastern gate.

Hail, Summer Sun! on thy imperial throne,
Whilst thy warm kisses rain on all below—
Thine was the task to roll away the stone
From Beauty's grave beneath the winter snow.

O splendid spirit of creative Spring!
Where—where is Death on such a morn as this?
Lo! from his dusky kingdom, while I sing,
Ten thousand captives burst to life and bliss!

The rapid swallow, screaming with delight,
Darts o'er the shining flood; the cuckoo calls;
The orchard trees are draped with banners white,
And song-birds revel in their verdant halls.

Come, careworn souls, from the sin-haunted town,
And learn to love the glorious haunts of health,
The dark green wood, the dell, and lofty down;
Come out and see the great Creator's wealth!

Out from the city darkness I have brought
My heart to drink the sunshine. This may prove
The blooming place of some peace-making thought,
And add fresh sweetness to the sweets of love.

Tell me what fairer gem can fortune buy
Than this bright dew-drop on an emerald spire?
Nay, 'tis no dew-drop that we wander by,
But a grand spark of the Eternal fire!

Thou canst not form, nor people, nor sustain
One world like that which sparkles on the sod;
And if thou couldst to such perfection gain,
What then, O man! wouldst thou be like to God?

Teeming with life, uncounted millions more
Glitter around, and each proclaims this fact:
If all the skill was thine, thou art too poor—
Too poor to find materials for the act.

Lift up thy dainty foot, sweet lady fair,
And thou canst crush full twenty worlds to death ;
Yet with this knowledge thou dost hardly dare
Bestir a dew-drop's billow with thy breath.

Hail ! bonny May ! to thee this rill of song
Runs from my heart with gladness ; in thy reign
A host of glories round my fancy throng—
A lovely host I may not view again.

This is the time when the great Spirit sends
Love messages to all. There is no flower
But what doth woo us to be better friends
With our best Lover in this summer hour.

This is the time when we may almost see
His gracious hand, from which all blessings fall.
Adieu, sweet May ; when thou art here with me,
Heaven is near, and Love is over all.

MAY MUSINGS.

This is the time when happy thoughts grow strong
As angels' arms, that bear our souls afar
To Beauty's feast of flowers, love, and song,
And Mercy's banquet on a sin-damned star.

Where the bright waters dance in the green vale,
Where pale, sweet roses smile their lives away,
Where the wild wood-dove tells its tender tale,
I will go forth to meet my Lady May.

Lo! I have trod the meadow's flowery floor,
And I am here, where I delight to be.
Time's fairest daughter hath returned once more;
Beautiful spirit! I am here with thee.

Hail! bright-robed beauty, laden with perfume
Of love's distilling in the groves of bliss.
Say, canst thou not some mortal shape assume,
That I might give thee back one burning kiss?

Thou dost enchant me with thy honeyed breath;
All the fair Graces round thee softly say,
"Beauty hath broken from the bonds of death
To live in thee, my gracious Lady May!"

Hark! how the warm winds shake the light bluebells;
The dark-framed drone drums out his deep-toned bass;
The amorous bees float from their dainty cells,
And springs the blithe lark from the emerald grass.

Up! my glad soul, to thy bright window bars,
And catch the rapture that he gaily flings
To his loved mate among the meadow stars;
Dear lord of love, how sweet thy pupil sings!

Stay! darling leader of earth's feathered choir,
And let me share the pleasures of thy flight
Towards the focus of ethereal fire,
That I may bathe in God's grand sea of light!

There will we linger on those silvery isles
That drop soft shadows on each crystal stream;
But I should miss a lovesome maiden's smiles:
Why comes she not to share my blissful dream?

Fly, fragrant zephyr, to her rose-wreathed bower,
And tarry not in all the tempting way
To taste the sweetness of the sweetest flower
Dame Nature woke to greet my Lady May.

And when thou com'st to where her cottage peeps
Out from the elm-grove by the village lane,
Do thou climb up to where she sweetly sleeps,
Waft the red buds, and tap her lattice pane.

If a sweet smile her ruby lips doth part,
Disturb her not, dear messenger of mine;
Her smiles are blossoms of a loving heart,
And but for them how poor my own would pine.

Then, when she waketh from her blest repose,
And whilst she cometh to the trysting tree,
Thou shalt caress her cheek, and kiss the rose
Virtue and health have planted there for me.

Tell her I sit beneath the flowery thorn,
Weaving a coronal for my heart's bride.
Then she will say, "My lover is forlorn;"
Then she will haste to nestle by my side.

Tell her—but, ah! my blissful dream is past.
Here lies one poor dead flower. What doth it say?
"Though Death's dark winter will not always last,
Remember, man, it is not always May!"

MAY'S WELCOME.

A SONG for May, for flowery May,
The mother of rosy June;
Merrily let us sing to-day,
And joyful be the tune.
There's never a blade, bud, bee, or bird,
But loveth the Queen of Spring;
And I pity the soul that hath not heard
That voice which bids me sing—
To welcome beautiful May.

Spirits of love from groves of bliss
Caress the fruitful earth—
Her bosom is thrilled with Mercy's kiss,
Her cheeks are bright with mirth;
Nothing hath life but what it shares
The warmth of an angel's lip,
From the heart of the oak to the blade that bears
A pearl on its tender tip—
To welcome beautiful May.

Come to the brake where the blackbird sings,
Where sweet-scented violets grow,
Where butterflies float on glorious wings,
And musical streamlets flow.

Gather the wild gems pretty and bright,
Fresh from Infinity's hand,
Spangled with jewels the Spirit of Light
Hath sprinkled over the land—
To welcome beautiful May.

Up and away in your happiest mood,
Come from the sorrowful town;
Laugh in the heart of the wealthy wood,
Dance on the purple down.
The Lord of nature loveth to see
His creatures gratefully gay,
As birds that sing in the flowery tree—
To welcome beautiful May.

MY BEAUTIFUL ROSE.

A PRIMROSE—the first, what a beauty! 'tis bliss
To meet such a pretty peace-maker as this.
'Tis strange, but last night I was dreaming :—I stood
Alone in the heart of a great cypress wood,
World-weary, faint-hearted, sick, hungry and cold,
When a quaint little Fairy came up through the mould,
Who chatted, whilst pushing aside the dead leaves,
Of Summer's love tokens, and golden corn sheaves ;
Then softly she told me bad thoughts were my foes—
I wonder if that was this beautiful Rose!

Welcome, dear herald of all things sweet,
Blossoming up beneath my feet ;
Blooming with innocence, beaming with grace,
Looking so lovingly up in my face ;
Charming, chaste, delicate, dainty and fair,
Bright bonny angel-thing, mocking my care ;
Bearing to mortals a message of love,
Lifting my thoughts to the Eden above.
Heaven has sent us glad tidings by thee,—
Beautiful Rose, thou art welcome to me!

Welcome her, Zephyrs, that wander so light ;
Wake all the Daisies that sleep in your flight ;
Call the gay Crocus and Violet blue ;
Bring out pure Golden Cups brimming with dew ;

Lift the sweet Cowslip, and tempt the brown Bee,
Raise the light Bluebells, and ring them with glee.
Fie, naughty Zephyr! ah! why do you stay
Kissing this dear little virgin all day,
Modest and pale as a soft summer moon?
Beautiful Rose, hast thou risen too soon?

Welcome her, singing birds, silent so long,
Greet her with carols, and praise her with song;
Whistle, gay Finch, with the yellow gold's tinge;
Laugh, merry Lark, by the fleecy cloud's fringe;
Warble, gay pupils of Heaven's good King:
Has He not sent her to tell you 'tis Spring?
Ah! you are making—love making I vow!
When were you ever so happy as now?
Flitting like spirits, from day-peep to close,
Over the head of my beautiful Rose.

Queen of the dingle, I knew a glad time
When I was as free as a flower from crime;
But I have wandered from Heaven, ah me!
What would I not give to be sinless like thee!
Dear little Rose, 'tis a mercy we meet;
I may be better and happier yet.
Hither, life-hating, I came with a sigh,
Weary with sorrow and longing to die;
But thou hast given my spirit repose,
Oh, how I love thee, my beautiful Rose!

AUTUMN SUNSET.

COME hither, come forth, my love, my mate,
And see the kingly sun retire;
Like archangel in splendid state
Passing through heaven's regal gate,
Clad in a robe of fire.
The glory of God is in the west,
His birds are singing His flowers to rest;
Come, if thou lovest what I love best,
And see the day expire.

Come hither, come out before the stars,
And I will show you blazing miles
Of silver, dun, and amber bars,
More brilliant than the bloom of Mars,
And crowds of coral isles.
O tarry not, love—the spirit of light
Seems waiting to wish us all "Good Night;
Come, if thou lovest my heart's delight,
And catch his parting smiles.

Look at that lovely mount of snow,
See where 'tis rent in twain
Rivers of gold flash out and flow,
Down to the blue abyss below,
And o'er the azure main.

The skies are grand—the earth is fair,
As if its trouble, sin, and care,
Lay dead beneath the knees of prayer,
No more to wake again.

Bend low, my love, and let us pray,
That when our race is run,
As calmly as this autumn day
Our souls may glide and drift away
To the Eternal Sun.
Thus may the glory of thy life
Be gathered to its close, sweet wife;
When peace shall gild the clouds of strife,
When Time's dark threads are spun.

ASPIRATIONS.

How shall I live
So that I may grow beautiful? I long
For things that will to me their beauty give,
And not for that which doth my being wrong.

I want to blow
Out into beauty, as the blooms of flowers
Rise from the rot they leave no more to know,
And from the earth-wrapt roots in the spring hours.

My life is bound
Unto my mother earth with stronger strings
Than I have strength to break: chained to the ground
I am, as a poor bird with wounded wings.

Shall I succumb,
And at the feet of that I should despise
Sink from the struggle, as an earthworm dumb,
That hath no hope above its sphere to rise?

I have desire,
Strong and intense, that will not let me bide.
From all that now I am I must aspire,
So that at last I may be beautified.

Oh for a light!
That I may find what path I ought to tread
Forth from the darkness of this nether night
To the high dwelling of the great undead!

THE TRUTH HUNTER.

Westerly walking from the pearly portal
Of a forsaken home, a youthful knight,
Whose heart was thrilled with dreams of fame immortal,
For the true love of Truth went forth to fight.
And he went not alone: a cheerful band—
The blessed natives of that golden land
Through which his journey lay—with him along
Went on the way he went: and a glad song
That unto him they sang was from a store
Of glorious legends he will hear no more
Within that fairy land; for gradually,
While he was walking down the quiet valley
Of Meditation from the sunny slopes,
These pleasant people of the place—his Hopes—
Hushed their gay voices, and too silent grew,
Because he wondered if their tales were true
That unto him they sang. Some of the best
Did shrink from him a-faint, and down to rest
Amid the blossoms sank in a death-swoon.
It was a pity they should fall so soon;
For when from them he went, his way was out
Into the dense domain of doleful Doubt,
Where, without Hope, to walk it is not well;
And to his fate this foul misfortune fell:

By the rude natives who around him swarmed
He, in that dim domain, became disarmed;
For in the fight with them he felt such fear,
That from his clasp they snatched his silver spear!
Soon then of him they made a captive, and,
Like to a poor blind Samson in the land,
Shorn of his strength, he was their sport; for thus
We are to them when that they conquer us.
And when to him they said, "What dost thou seek
Of us to find?" the knight, in language meek,
Said, "From the golden land of love and youth,
It was for my dear love, the lady Truth,
That I came hither." Quick they answered, "Show
Her unto us; we would thy lady know."
He, being blind among the rugged tribe,
Strove unto them his lady to describe;
But unto him they cried with their loud laughter,
"He doth not know her whom he hunteth after!"
He then, by them much vexed, went forth to woo her,
And from his heart this wild cry went unto her:

"I want thee, Truth! I want thee, thou grand daughter
Of the great God, that doth in all things dwell—
In earth or heaven, in air or fire, or water—
I want to find thee, Truth! Where is thy cell?

"Out of my soul I would with song salute thee.
By the true love I gave thee in my youth,
I long to sing thy everlasting beauty,
I want to be thy troubadour, O Truth!

"I yearn in battle to assert thy grandeur;
I aim to grasp thy adamantine spear,
That I might drive it through the tongue of Slander,
So of her malice thou shalt have no fear.

"Where in the wide world shall I hie to find thee?
If that I ask thee of the worldly wise,
I do not see thee pure as I would find thee;
I do not know thee in thy strange disguise!

"Thy earnest hunters seek thee in confusion;
In adverse paths they ran a race, to prove
They do not know thee from a dire delusion,
Though unto thee they long to give their love!

"Wilt thou, O Truth, out to my sight stand clearer
If with the worldly-wise I do not walk?
Shall I unto thy majesty live nearer,
Where idiots babble, and where children talk?

"Lead me, I pray, to thy eternal altar,
And let me trim my torch, that I may show
Its blessed beams unto the feet that falter
And a safe path to where thy pure streams flow!

"I want thee for a world in which we miss thee,
And for a land wherein, as Judas did
Caress thy brother Christ, the traitors kiss thee,
While that they sell thee for the highest bid!

"Thou hast been robbed; thy glorious goods are mingled
And scattered o'er the land with the vile ware
Of cheats triumphant. Thy pure pearls are jingled
By vulgar jesters in the great world's fair!

"They have made speed from thy high throne to drag
thee;
Thy snow-white robe is trampled in the mire.
When that thou speakest, 'twas their joy to gag thee;
And Discord from thy clasp hath snatched thy lyre.

"Thou art in bondage kept: why, then, to free thee
Do not thy friends make speed? Why are they stayed?
Alas for them! they are ashamed to see thee,
And at thy coming forth they shrink, afraid!

"Why do the sellers hide thee from the buyers?
Is it not written in the Holy Word—
Have they not read how that the lips of liars
Are an abomination to the Lord?

"Shame on the land shall come for these dire doings:
Grief shall grow great where that the people cry.
How shall we know thee, Truth, in thy tattooings?
How shall we tell thee from a loathsome lie?"

A DREAM OF DEATH.

I saw a kingdom in my sleep,
Where man shall never wake to weep—
A world of horror. Blank and bare,
Without a hope, without a care;
Unblest by love, uncurst by crime—
A world beyond the reach of time:
A bubble's wreck, an empty skull,
An ugly nought, of nothing full;
Devoid of motion, change, or breath,—
A ghastly sepulchre of death,
A realm by nought but fancy trod,
Where Death was God.

Hard by that land of silence deep,
Where man shall never wake to weep,
I saw a weary craven creep;
With abject air and solemn tread,
As mutes that stalk beside the dead,
Crawl through the city. So he crept,
And sighed, and cried, and raved, and wept
And howl'd for death as if 'twere bliss
To barter life for nothingness.
Was it a blast of fear or doubt
That blew the lamp of reason out?

Down that dark lane poor Judas trod.
He walks like one forgot by God,
Dragg'd by despair, the dungeon king,
From cave to cave, where syrens sing
Of peaceful rest in glossy pools,
Drugs, halters, bullets, and bright tools
That float around him in the air,
Like Macbeth's dagger, sharp and bare.
Save us, sweet Heaven, from the foes
That crowd around him as he goes—
Goes where? I miss him in my dream—
Is that tall shadow in his van,
Or did this grave eat up the man?
I halt beside a purple stream,—
I hear the slamming of a door,—
An awful voice said, "Never more:
You scorned your life, you dared to die,
You sought for Death,—and here am I."

Oh, Lord, what joy it was to wake
In this fair world of life once more;
The moon flood, on my chamber floor,
Shone like a silver lake.
And yet with life there cometh pain;
I hope I shall not sleep again
To dream that dream, and yet I know
The lamp of life is burning low,
But Care forsakes his iron plough
When the sweet angel bids him. How

Softly these silk-fringed curtains fall
Over the shining windows! All
The flood of glory from above
Fades, like the blush of virgin love;
Those guardian angels Heaven sent
Are watching round an empty tent:
I wander where I would not bide
For this fair world and worlds beside;
I see that kingdom in my sleep,
Where man shall never wake to weep.

The sea lay waveless on its bed,
All things within were smitten dead,
And high above the lifeless flood,
Hung, like a frosted bowl of blood,
A ghostly, smouldering moon, that sat
Still as the ark on Ararat,—
Sat in a mighty spectre's palm,
Upstanding in the awful calm,
Atop the roof of Vulcan's forge;
And thus said he: "Like this, for aye,
Fools fling the jewel of life away."
Then, far adown the mountain gorge,
He flung the lurid ball that lit
The vast, unfathomed, gaping pit;
There, there it paused, I know not why.
'Twas like the ball of Satan's eye,
An eye malignant, glinting through
A rented pall of inky hue—

A rented pall of darkness, spread
Over the grave of all things dead.
Yet by its fitful, sickly beam
The dreary region of my dream
Was half revealed, that I might see
The grave of life; but, dreary me!
Lest that we might its secrets tell,
That death, which always comes too soon,
Crept like a shadow, up the dell, and ate the moon.

A PSALM OF LOVE.

Soul of my mother dead, come and caress me,
Lift my sad heart its life-trouble above,
Drive from my spirit the thoughts that distress me,
Rock me to rest in the arms of thy love.

Under the shadows that over me darken
Denser and deeper, I cry in my pain,
"I am thy child, mother; wilt thou not hearken?
Let me not cry for thy comfort in vain."

Out of the house of death, where in thy sleeping
Thou hast no dream of my misery vast,
Weary my memories wander a-weeping
All this long night for the beautiful past.

All the night long, without hopes that have lit me
On to this grief from the sweet Nevermore,
Weary, my soul for thy comforting pity
Weeps as a child by a dead mother's door.

Wilt thou not come to me? Canst thou not hear me?
Weep I too far from thy heaven above?
Lo! in this life there is little to cheer me;
Kiss me to death in the clasp of thy love!

A SONG OF FAITH.

I SHALL not die,
I cannot die:
I am immortal. Even I,
A mightless man of Adam's race,
Hieing toward the unbegun,
Shall in creation find a place
When on the ashes of the sun
Darkness has built its throne on high;
Ah! even then I shall not die.

Hence! to your lair,
Foul thoughts that dare
Crawl from the den of black Despair
About the path I have to tread
Towards my future! Love should write
Upon a tombstone at my head
Only my name, and a good-night
That should be as a friend's good-bye.
Say not, "he died"; I cannot die!

If lack of breath,
Which entereth
A human form at birth, be death,
Then shall I to my death depart
With sickly thoughts like these: Oh, love!

My mother earth will eat this heart,
With which my life is interwove,
And I shall to oblivion hie!
Hush! Hateful thought! I cannot die.

I have to range
Through states of change,
Mysterious, solemn, dark, and strange;
And all the while, with all my might,
I must, because it is my fate,
Cry, "Father! Father! give me light,
That I might reach Thy palace gate,
To which my aspirations fly
With hope and faith that cannot die!"

A SONG OF HOPE.

As the music of a rill
  Through a valley creeping,
When the day in death is still,
  And the stars are keeping
Watch above the beautiful
  Flowers, sweetly sleeping,
So the memories of Youth
  Through my life run weeping.

Come and weep, ye gentle things,
  For my past bewailing—
This is what my heart-hope sings
  When my faith seems failing.
Oh, ye children of my love,
  Grief shall have its quailing
In the life to which we are
  Through the darkness sailing.

As I listen to their song,
  Though no star be showing,
And the night seems cold and long,
  I am blest by knowing
That out of thy heart, O Night,
  There's a bright day growing,
And that Love shall sing to God
  In its glorious glowing.

THE CRY OF A CLOD.

Lord of the People, what art thou,
That I to thee should blandly bow
A blighted body, born to stand
Erect upon my mother-land,
But bent toward the earth I tread
With fifty years of toil for bread?
Art thou, whom we a noble call,
More like the great good God of all
Than I, in whom thou dost but see
A common clod of low degree?
Richer than I to find thy tomb
Thou didst not leave thy mother's womb;
In death, as me, thou wilt be poor,
What art thou then, with all thy store,
Better than those who have thy scorn
Because they are to labour born?
Ah! some of these have hands that spin
A shroud, my lord, to wrap thee in!
Who then will to thy greatness bow?
Lord of the People, what art thou?

PARTING.

Near unto me, my love, so near to me
As you can creep; here by my side you are;
Yet in my heart I have a fear that we
Have from each other never loved so far.

Some awful guest that we did not invite
Hath here between us made himself a place;
'Tis the divider Time, that with his might
Doth strive to thrust thee from my strong embrace.

Give me thine hand, and let me hold it fast;
My life is fretted with a frightful fear
That from each other we are parting fast,
Though by each other we do sit so near.

What! can this be the hand I loved to fold
When our young life was thrilled with dreams of bliss,
And unto thee my hopes of it were told?
That hand you gave me then was not like this.

Doth the gaunt guest between us wish to win,
As if it were his right all else above,
This golden girdle from thy finger thin,
This endless symbol of our lasting love?

How it is loosened at his touch! his breath
Hath slain the roses on thy cheek; thy hair
Is a fit feather for the helm of Death,
Thy brow the temple of a constant care.

Thou art not what thou wast, my love; and yet
Let not my words unto thy soul sound strange;
We have been parting ever since we met,
We twain are dwellers in a state of change.

THE WAIL OF A WANDERER.

Out in the desert, far from good, forsaken,
Fearful and frail,
Hark! how a sad soul, as a dry reed shaken,
Lifteth its wail:

"Why have I left my happiness behind me?
Dark was the day [Thee
When my wild thoughts, O God, went forth to find
In the wrong way.

"I heard a searcher in the stone book saying
'There is no God;'
And after his my vain thoughts went a-straying
In a wrong road.

The lamp of faith that was within me lighted
Hath lost its flame;
I dwell in darkness, as a soul benighted
In its own shame.

"But in this darkness, as a lost sheep bleating,
Why should I roam?
Sadly I hear a tender voice entreating
Me to come home.

"All through this black night, in the dreadful distance
Of the dead years,
That sad voice crieth with the sweet persistence
Of Love in tears.

"I will arise and go unto my Father
Through all things foul;
The husks of pleasure that I came to gather
Have starved my soul.

"I heard the voice of my good angel pleading
That I might flee,
And hie with her where the great Christ hangs bleeding
For bliss to be."

Thus in the desert, far from good, forsaken,
Fearful and frail,
Of a sad spirit, by a great grief shaken,
This was the wail.

TO A COMET.

HAIL! thou fair, fleet, footless runner
In the broad blue boundless heavens,
Where ten thousand suns sit shining,
Each the monarch of a kingdom,
Making with their splendid presence,
For the glory of the All-God,
Beauty, harmony, and order.

On the breast of the man-mother,
Here in this still summer midnight,
I, the least of her great children,
Lift my eyes to thee with wonder,
While the vain thoughts of a midget
Thus to thee, my wonder-waker,
Thus to thee aloud are crying:

Let me, O thou radiant ranger
Of the great World-Builder's garden,
Where the glorious flowers of heaven,
Where the ever-blooming stars grow—
Let me hie with thee, O rover,
Through the grand sunflower forest
Where thy pathway is provided!
In the beautiful blue arching
Of this world, unto my seeming
Thou art as a seraph marching
With a plume of light upstreaming
High above thy glittering helmet.

Oh, thou traveller tremendous!
When again thou comest this way,
In thy run around the awful
Great white throne of the Eternal,
What shall I be, whom thou leavest
On the breast of the man-mother
With these thoughts that cry unto thee?

A LEGEND OF GOOD AND EVIL.

You ask me, Master, how it came to pass
That Good with Evil is so mixed. I have
Besought my muse to tell me, and she told
Thus unto me a story I should love
Also to be your answer: In the time
When the first Adam from his high estate
Was tempted down by sin, you now shall know
That three sweet natives of the home most high—
Love, Hope and Pity—in the world remained
Behind their sister angels, that unto
Their first abode went up with the sad news
Of our poor parents' fall. And as, to sing
Her cheerful carols to the sons of Care,
Hope went her way about the world, she came
To where, beside the stream of life which flows
Out from the soul of God, her sisters sad—
Pity and Love—sat weeping, with no hope,
Until Hope came unto them; and the way
She came to them was this. Her sweet voice said:
"Oh, my good sisters! by this sacred stream
Weeping your souls away, be of good cheer!
And, for your comfort, take me to your hearts."
But the fair weepers shook their heads and said:
"This stream of life, which hath been fouled by sin,
Is now a stream of Evil, and will be
To all the human race." Then unto them

Their happy sister smiled, and said, "How can
That be all evil which is partly good?
Because your tears are mingled with the flood,
It shall unto the human race flow sweet,
And what they else might hate much they must love."
Then to her heart Love took her sister bright,
And hand in hand forth to the world they went
To toil for human good; but Pity still
Bode weeping by the stream, and still she bides.
Such is the little legend that my muse
Told me of Good and Evil.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

I GRIEVE to part with thee, dear Night;
  Thou art so glorious, grand and calm,
  As if a flood of Eden's balm
Commingled with the witching light
Of all thy stars, that smile and say,
Linger and love us while you may.

It is more joy than I can tell,
  To sit, dear Night, in thy still hours,
  Musing among the sleeping flowers
That in my cottage garden dwell,
As now I rest, from sorrow free—
Save this, that I must part from thee.

The angel Sleep invites me hence
  To softer couch of rest away;
  But happy Thought would have me stay,
Spell-bound by thy magnificence.
It is to me a thought unsweet
That we may part, no more to meet.

What if I sleep, no more to look
  Thus on thy charms? Soon to my bed
  A morn will come, to find a dead
Poor shrunken shape, by me forsook.
What then? If I from faith take heart,
Should I from Beauty grieve to part?

Oh, Night! is there of joy no more
  So sweet as this respite from care,
  Which is to me as angels' fare
Sent from the great world-Father's store?
Is there for the free soul no bliss
So good as this?

EVENTIDE.

It is the time that men call Eve;
Peace to the poor, that toil and spin;
The day is dying—let me weave
A shroud of song to fold it in.

I may not live to see its last—
May die before its end must be;
I know my life will soon be past,
But all the days are friends to me.

There is not one of all the race—
Of all the race that ever ran
Over the world to Death's embrace,
But what hath been a friend to man.

I know they bring both care and strife,
And some of them, I mind with pain,
Left brands of sorrow on my life;
But these will never come again.

My lyre is strung with joyless strings;
I wish my heart from grief were free,
And that my thoughts were gladder things
That come to keep me company.

They crowd about me where I sit,
Telling me tales of parting hours,
Till, as I list, mine eyes are lit
With tears that rain on faded flow'rs.

They warn me of approaching night,
And of a future unbegun;
Oh! that my thoughts were calm and bright,
As clouds about the sinking sun.

Then would they come in splendour drest,
As maids to kiss a happy bride:
Ah! I am not so sweetly blest,
Because it is my eventide.

TO A WOOD NYMPH.

Oh, limpid, light, and laughing stream!
I wish the Lord of life supreme
Would make my life to be as thine,
That I might run, and sing, and shine
In my appointed path about
The world, before my life ran out
Into that beachless, boundless sea,
The terrible Eternity.

Forth from the kingdom of my youth
My life ran as a pleasant truth
From Beauty's lips in royal rhyme,
And all my senses to their chime
Went dancing with delight along
A vale of roses, where the song
Of Hope was heard. This as a dream
Lies far behind me, laughing stream!

It is a thought I grieve to pen:
Was I not nearer heaven then?
So sweet as then my life is not,
So glad as then is not my lot;
My life runs through a desert waste,
I fear along my course to haste,
And oft my heaven doth not seem
So near as then, bright laughing stream.

SIGHING FOR SPRING.

When, with its bewitching weather—
As an angel from her Aidenn,
Dancing o'er the honeyed heather—
To our land that laughing maiden,
Merrie May, came, and her fluty
Voice, amid the bud and blossom,
Welcomed up the seraph Beauty
From her slumber in the bosom
Of the marvellous man-mother,
I beheld a grey-grown brother;
Saw him sitting on a showy
Couch of daisies, where a snowy
Hawthorn hung its boughs above him.
Did no body live to love him,
That he thus should sit so lonely
'Neath the hawthorn? He was only
Looking back into a pleasant
Past for ever with a tender
Wish that it was ever present
To enfold him in its splendour;
And the thoughts that he sat thinking,
In this lay have found their linking;
So that you here may discover
Grief that he sat brooding over.

"Come! thou Spirit of my youth so long ago departed!
As unto my mother Earth the ever faithful Spring
Cometh, when the dead within her heart to life are started,
Come, and thrill me with the joy that thou alone canst bring!
Thou from me art flown afar, and for thy want I wither,
As the flowers that sicken when the harvest hours are o'er.
Good it would be for me if I could but woo thee hither;
Must thy answer to my cry be, 'Never, never more'?

"Is the temple thou hast left so far behind thee given
To the twin hags, Pain and Care, their haunt and home to be?
Is the beauty of my life so from my being driven,
That within it there is not a resting-place for thee?
As into its last year's nest the swallow drops delighted,
Canst thou not return, my long-lost pleasure to restore?
By my dire decay art thou from thy old home affrighted?
Must thy answer to my cry be ever, 'Never more'?

"Come! and bless me with that bliss my thoughts are wailing after,
In this desert of old age through which I wander on
From the green and golden land of hope, light, love, and laughter,
And the glory of a life from thee to ruin gone!

Come! and feed the fading fire of life I vainly cherish,
That a hope I sent to meet thee through the wind and rain
May not in the lap of Doubt lie down its head, and perish,
And no more in search of thee lift up its look again!"

So, to the Spirit of his Youth, cried the soul of the old man sitting in the grove of hawthorns.
Tenderly unto him, while he wept, came Sleep, the comforter.
Back unto the better time, far down into the beautiful
Ever blooming haunts of Hope, the wizard Slumber bore him.
In the village street he played among his old companions,
But unto him, even then, a sorrow came and smote him—
Came and smote him, as the first fair flowers of spring are smitten
By the frost-winds of a world in which they wake too early;
For, while in the street he played among his dear companions,
From his heart the bird named Joy, that had its nest within it,
In a fearful flight flew forth. For from his father's cottage
Came a crowd of people, clad in garments black and gloomy,

Bearing down the village lane toward him a white sleeper;
Bearing by him where he stood the corse of his dear mother!
Sadly by her grave he crept down, in the acre holy.
Down upon her coffin door he heard the clay-clods rattle,
And the knell of the death-bell into his heart was driven,
So that, from his slumber in the hawthorn grove he started—
Started from his slumber in the hawthorn grove, exclaiming:
"Wrong it is to murmur with the pleasure of the present!
From my journey to my past this wisdom I have won:
That the Eden of my youth was not all bright and pleasant:
Teach me, holy Lord of Life, to say 'Thy will be done!'"

A GREETING TO SUMMER.

HAIL! of seasons the delightful queen!
Beautiful Summer! in luxurious robes
Of glorious green, with radiant roses set
In elegant profusion, unto thee
My happy thoughts are as a band of birds
That, in a scented sea of dainty light,
Swim o'er the whirling world. O Heaven! how good
It is that thou art here! How the fresh fruits
Of earth to ripeness quicken at thy kiss,
Thou all-caressing Sun! Now to the shade
We from the fervour of thy burning beams
Hasten, and hide, as our first parents hid,
Or strove to hide, from the All-Searcher's sight,
When conscience smote their souls. So unto us
In this deep dingle of a wealthy wood,
Cometh the seraph Light, looking upon
Our pleasant privacy through a grand screen
Of dainty leaf, such as the piper Pan
Might love to nestle under.

THE END OF A LIFE.

PART I.

'Twas winter in the land. The east wind blew,
O'er the grey down, and through the city's heart,
Cold as the kiss of Death. The factory gate
Was bolted by depression. Starving men
Dotted the streets like statues of Despair;
And savage Famine, from their sunken eyes,
Shot the sharp shafts of Envy. Love went out
From many homes when Poverty came in;
A man became a wolf that fought his wife
For a bare crust of bread their hungry child
Snatched from the hand of Pity. In those days,
A poor toil hunter, weary of the chase,
Returned half-frozen, to his joyless haunt,
And tried to scare the frost fiend with the blaze
Of his hard shaving bed. Ah! what is that
He lifts so kindly to his long, lean arms,
To share his passive comfort? 'Tis the corse
Of her for whom he fought full forty years
With all the ills of life. A jury said:
She perished by starvation. "Righteous God!
And has it come to this?" the old man cried;
Then sudden sinking with his ghastly load,
Before the crimson flames, he laid her down,
And kissed her shrunken cheek till reason flew
Its lofty throne, like a poor frightened bird,

And left his soul in darkness. Then the glare
Of the last shaving flickered and expired,
And double blackness hid him. In that night
Ages of torment came and crawled away—
Ages in which a bitter hate of life
Outgrew all other passions, and he wept
A flood of tears because he could not die
And be no more for ever.

PART II.

'Twas winter in the heart of a poor wretch,
That from the city crept away to hide
His body from the gaze of God and man
In a dense forest thicket. In his path
There was a woodman's cot, by which he paused,
Because a little damsel sang within,
"There is a happy land." The old man stood,
Heaven-arrested, as a serpent charmed
By the sweet spell of music, and exclaimed,
"That 's a dear lie Hope told me long ago,
And yet I love to hear it." Then he stole
Softly, on tiptoe, round the garden hedge,
And through the cottage window, unobserved,
Beheld the happy singer, sitting by
A baby brother's cradle. On her lap
The Holy Book lay open, and she read,
After her psalm was sung, of our dear Lord,
Who said, "O, all that labour, come to me,
And I will give you rest." A painful sob,
Bursting its bondage, smote her tender ear,

And looking up she saw an old man's face
Through the geranium branches. 'Twas a face
Never to be forgotten. All the woe
Of a lost soul seemed written on the front
Of that life-haunted skull. Out from her lips
Flew, like a swallow's scream, her startled cry;
But when her better courage conquered fear,
Again she dared a glance, and, lo! 'twas gone—
She knew not how or whither.

PART III.

'Twas winter in the wood. A starving man
Sat in the hollow of an old oak tree,
And wept himself to sleep; in which he trod
The banquet hall of Plenty. A rich feast
Of all good things in full abundance lay
On sumptuous tables, decked with fragrant flowers
And full ripe autumn fruits from every clime
Beneath the radiant sun. The golden walls
Were all ablaze with splendour. Precious stones
Of every dainty tint, like mimic stars,
Spangled a jasper floor. The lofty roof
Was one soul-witching mass of lovely things—
Gay roses, verdant leaves, and ears of corn,
Tangled with rare festoons of bursting grapes.
It must have been a heaven to the birds
That sang among such glory. In his dream,
A busy mem'ry darting through his brain,
Recalled the woodman's daughter and her hymn—
"There is a happy land." Awhile he gazed,

With admiration, gratitude, and love,
On the enchanting scene. The savage winds
Tore through the woods ten thousand lions strong,
And o'er the cliff to fight the foaming flood
Sprang out with horrid yells. The heartless oak
Waved its bare arms above a heartless man,
And still he heard them not. O sleep, how sweet
It is to dream of Heaven! Looking through
The grand pavilion portals, he beheld,
Hasting to meet him through fair fields of flowers,
The spirit of his wife. Impelled by love,
Sudden he rose on the elastic air,
And with a blissful motion sailed away
To clasp her—his for ever. But a cloud
Came up between them, and just when they met,
A fatal arrow by a black-plum'd knight,
Urged lightning swift, was buried in his breast,
And, with a shriek, from his great bliss he fell
Down to his sorrow in the old oak-tree,
And, waking, cried, "God save me," till he found—
Ah! what found he, who was a poor white slave,
Worn out with toil and worthless to the world?—
'Mid the bright tears that sparkled at his feet,
He found the pearl of a great price, and cried,
"Jesus, I thank Thee!" Then he smiled and died.

WINTER VIOLETS.

THERE they are! blue as my first lover's eyes;
Tokens of love ever tender;
Heralds of hope to all hearts of the wise,
Wearing humility's splendour.
Dear little tender things,
Fair little slender things!
Bright as the hopes of my childhood;
Smiling at come what may,
All the black winter day,
Out in the blast-shatter'd wild wood.

Sweet little daughters of Beauty and Grace,
I should be sad to forsake you;
You shall not die in this desolate place,
But to my heart I will take you!
Come, pretty violets!
Neat little violets!
Hark! how the bitter winds wrangle,
Down where the merry rill
Leaps o'er the water-mill,
And the wild cherry boughs tangle.

When the sad zephyr comes over the brook,
When it comes over to kiss you,
How it will search all the grey bramble-nook;
How it will murmur to miss you:

Violets! Violets!
Sweet-blooming violets!
Sweet as the breath of an angel!
Heralds of love to man,
Smiling in summer's van,
Preaching in Beauty's evangel.

Why should we sigh for life's loftier spheres,
More than this beautiful cluster?
By the endurance of trials and fears
Souls win their infinite lustre.
In the black midnight time
Stars wear their golden prime—
Pluck is a king in disaster:
War proves the hero great,
Love maketh trouble sweet,
Self is humanity's blaster!

THE SNOW.

'Tis morn—and o'er the sod
A livid globe of flame,
A miniature of nature's God,
Below the home by angels trod,
Hangs in its massive frame.
It is the king of day,
The glorious glowing sun;
But over summer's blue array
He wears a robe of dusky grey,
The homeless winds have spun.
I see his glory wane,
I hear the north wind blow,
And, gazing through my lattice pane,
I wake my harp's ecstatic strain
To welcome heaven's snow—
The whirling, curling snow,
That wavers in its flow,
As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
Or die the sky below.

'Tis come—the pure, the bright,
The virgin snow is come;
The earth is clad in raiment white,
Woven by waving spires of light

In the frost spirit's loom,
Over the busy town,
Over the forest bare;
Over the vale and o'er the down,
The gentle snow drops softly down
Through hazy realms of air.
Oh, what can merry spring
Or rosy summer show,
Or what can wealthy autumn bring
To match the gift of winter's king,
Old England's crown of snow?
  The whirling, curling snow,
  That wavers in its flow,
As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
  Or die the sky below.

The snow—in which we see
His love that never dies,
The bloom of God's eternal tree,
The blossom of infinity,
Is flowing from the skies.
We know there beats beneath
The throbbing life of spring—
We know 'twas Mercy flung this wreath,
From heaven's window o'er the heath,
Therefore we gaily sing:
Come down, ye dancing flakes,
Come, till the hill-tops grow,
And all our vales are silver lakes,
For I love all that Nature makes.
  There's beauty in the snow,

The whirling, curling snow,
That wavers in its flow,
As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
Or die the sky below.

'Tis night, and with its gloom
The sable pall of cloud
Is shattered by the winds that roam.
The sky is in its golden bloom,
The earth is in her shroud;
And while the star-lamps glow,
The stream that sang is stricken dumb.
Nor bird, nor bee, may wake to hum
A carol to the snow,
The whirling, curling snow,
That wavers in its flow,
As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
Or die the sky below.

The frost—'tis come once more.
Oh, cruel frost, away,
Thou art not welcome to the poor.
When poverty comes in the door
Love goeth out, they say;
But 'tis not always so.
There are many trusting hearts
That love each other best in woe,
And will not let their angel go
When Fortune's smile departs.
Then welcome be the snow,
Her follower, the frost,

And all that heaven doth bestow;
But woe is ours if we should know
That life or love was lost
  Through the whirling, curling snow,
  That wavers in its flow,
As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
  Or die the sky below.

EASTER DREAMS.

When to the playground of the lamb,
Over the lea from dainty cells,
The belted, bronzy, brown bees swam
To kiss the golden cowslip bells,
And more than this,
In the delightful Easter hours
When Psyche from her prison foul,
In search of bliss,
Sprang out to life a wingèd soul,
I nestled on a bank of flowers,
Breathing the breath
Of blossoms bright,
That were from death,
To life and light,
Woke by the children of the sun,
Which ye call beams.
Who do the Poets' banquet shun,
Or fail to feast their souls on dreams?
And from my bed of green and gold
Beneath the boughs, above the mould,
I saw in the blue wold aloft
A fleecy, fair, fantastic, soft
Slow-sailing swarm of silver white
Summery clouds, that in my sight
Swam as a vessel on the deep
Swims when the saucy sea winds sleep,

And Fancy of the clouds above,
Sang thus to please my happy love.

After the days of mighty March,
The burly trumpeter of Spring,
Are numbered 'neath the world's blue arch,
When orchard trees are blossoming,
It is a joy the Father grants
Unto the blest inhabitants
Of that high home all else above,
Where all the people live on love,
That they may quit their blissful spheres,
To live and smile
A happy while
On this wild wilderness of tears,
Which is the star God loveth most,
Of all the great harmonious host.
And a death-haunted orb from whence
Christ, for the love of Adam's race,
Arose to the magnificence
Of endless life, from Death's embrace.

Therefore the pilgrim angels leave
That bliss, for which we fret and grieve,
In happy crowds.
And fleecy clouds,
Sailing above this world so far,
Are unto them as ships afloat
In the blue sea about a star,
Or each of them a pleasure boat,
Wherein the pilgrim angels glide
From heaven in the Easter-tide.

Hark! o'er the land
A joyful band
Of minstrel birds on blissful wings,
Ascend to meet
The angel fleet;
All the green wood with music rings;
And spirits sweet,
From blossoms fair
Arise to greet,
On wings of air,
Them to this world that we call ours;
Hence they are wafted, by the breath
Of wonders from the house of death,
Called April flow'rs;
For all these pilgrim ships, that glide
Along the blue
Bright heaven, in the Easter-tide,
Are made of dew—
The dainty dew of herbs and flowers,
Which, in the holy Easter-hours
Fell on them in the starlight mild,
As tears upon a sleeping child
Fall from the milder orbs of love,
Bending its virgin babe above.
And there are clouds, of which we know
They were not from the seas below,
Nor from the rolling river's breast,
Raised to such peaceful states of rest.
There is among
That snowy throng

Of sunny clouds, that swim and shine,
Up in the bright
Blue sea of light,
A floating fount of love divine,
Made of that passion-tide, which swept
From mercy's heart when Jesus wept.
And when the pilgrim angels glide
From heaven, in the Easter-tide,
'Tis from that fount, the world above,
They drink his tears, and say, "What love!"

Thus to the muse, that I love best,
Fair fancy sang at love's request,
And even as I heard her sing
Her happy theme—
Was it a dream?
I saw the heavens opening;
Not with the sound of sudden haste,
But as a languid lily's mouth
Opens at noon, to catch the chaste
Kiss of an air wave from the south.
So softly opening more and more,
Up in the skies,
Until mine eyes
Seemed looking in through heaven's door.
And through that door an angel throng,
With tender sounds of holy song,
Came; and, before the angels, flew
Down to our planet's beach of blue,
A flock of doves; and by that beach,
Within the pilgrim angels' reach,

So light afloat,
A cloud of dew,
Shaped as a boat,
Swam in my view.
And then—and then, that fairer boat,
Than ever fancy found afloat,
Drawn by a flock of doves along,
Came sailing with the angel throng;
Nearer, and nearer yet, until,
High on a heaven-piercing hill,
Out in the west,
I saw it rest,
And from its bounds the happy band
Leapt light as snow-flakes on the land.
Then from the earth beneath their feet
Brake a bright host of blossoms sweet,
Such as were never brought by spring,
Save to a soul's imagining;
So I believe that they were brought
From heaven by the happy thought,
For mine were as that blissful throng
Of doves that drew the boat along;
And if thine inner eyes are good,
When that thy mind is in the mood,
And if on such a bank of flowers,
You nestle in the Easter hours,
More than I saw you may behold,
And sweeter may your dreams be told;
Mine is a little earth child's lay
With whom 'twill pass away.

DOWN HOME.

Oh, the day is gone to rest,
  And I revel in the beams
Of a moon in yellow drest,
  That hath brought me happy dreams
Of a love-enchanting spot,
And a little moonlit cot,
    Down home.

And fair spirits of my race
  Crowd about me, as I lie
Dreaming of that happy place,
  With the yellow moon on high,
Beaming, as it loved to beam,
On the joys of which I dream,
    Down home.

Soft as butterflies that sit
  On the blossoms they love best,
So my wingèd fancies lit
  By the moon in yellow drest,
Nestlè down upon my heart,
Till my memories depart
    Down home.

And I dream with open eyes,
  Pleasant dreams I must adore,
Of that pretty paradise,
  With a being at the door,
Calling, in a gentle way
To a little lad at play,
    Down home.

In the molten mellow light
  Of the yellow moon above,
She is looking very white;
  But her voice is full of love,
Full of love that seems to be
Like an angel's call to me,
    Down home.

Home again, at love's desire,
  Merry, innocent, and glad,
Romping by my father's fire
  With a kitten frolic mad,
And a bonnie brother boy,
Laughing like the soul of joy,
    Down home.

Swinging on my garden swing,
  As I swung in days of yore,
When the trees were blossoming,
  Forty years ago or more.
Thanks to mem'ry, strong and kind,
For that swing I left behind,
    Down home.

Sailing with the sweetest lass
  Heaven ever made for love,
On a liquid looking-glass
  Of the summer stars above.
Singing, as we used to sing,
When the hills were echoing.
    Down home.

With her, from my care afar,
  Walking in the witching light
Of a primrose-coloured star
  That hath lit my dreams to-night
Happy, beautiful, and good,
In our glorious goldenhood,
    Down home.

Leaning o'er the bridge at eve,
  Listening to the charm that wells
O'er a scene I wept to leave,
  From a band of dancing bells;
Silvery bells that sang to me
Hopefully and joyfully,
    Down home.

Ah! the spell is breaking fast,
  But the bells are tinkling still,
Faintly in that happy past,
  And my spirit in their thrill
Trembles out, in blissful tears,
For the dear departed years,
    Down home.

A BOOK.

My lady's face is as a book
Whereon I love with joy to look,
  Because I read the golden lore
Of Truth and Faith upon it blent,
  Such as I never read before,
That happy hour when it was sent
To make my life magnificent.

An open book it is to me,
Revealing half my destiny,
  And for my care a pleasant charm;
My dearest thoughts it doth entrance;
  It is to save my soul from harm,
A shrine from whence her virtues glance
With more than mortal elegance.

A joy it is much joy above,
To read it by the lamps of love,
  That in thought's palace windows shine;
Ah! that to me is joy indeed;
  But there 's a pleasure more divine
My lady will to me concede;
It is to kiss the book I read.

THE RED MAY.

When that the lanes grow shady,
  When that the winds blow sweet,
And violets bloom for my lady,
  Up at the wood-king's feet.
Come to the land where the dead lay,
  Drowned in the autumn strife,
When the powers of death made headway
  Over the flowers of life;
There while the fresh spring roses
  Break into bloom, you may see,
And stand like the prophet Moses,
  In front of a burning tree.

Out on the land where the dead lay,
  Buried in grime and mire,
A spirit of life to the red May,
  Came with a torch of fire.
First with a pink pale wan light,
  Then with a flush of flame,
As blood through a languid cheek bright
  Burns, so the spring fire came.
And if to the feast of roses,
  You come with the bronzy bee,
You may stand like the prophet Moses,
  In front of a burning tree.

Over the land where the dead lay,
  Up through its roots in the sod,
Sped, on the boughs of the red May,
  Flame from the torch of God!
And when the sun fire dwindled
  Down in the urn of days,
By the lamp of faith fresh kindled,
  I stood with a thought that says,
"When spring birds sing to the roses,
  And blue-bells ring for the bee,
You may stand like the prophet Moses,
  In front of a burning tree."

Out on the land where the dead lay,
  Kept by the care divine,
A bird in the heart of the red May,
  Sang to a spirit in mine,
Songs of a wonder olden,
  Seen by the eyes of youth,
In a nook of the volume golden,
  And a shrine of holy truth.
Thus when the fresh spring roses
  Break from their winter urns,
I stand like the prophet Moses,
  In front of a bush that burns.

A CLOUD WITH A DOOR IN IT

If from the story of my life you read
This truthful chapter, you will never more
Ask why I love beyond all other flowers
The soft moon-yellow Primrose. Well I mind
How that 'twas winter in our land, and that
I was, because my old friend Trade lay dead,
One of the mourners in a city street,
Seeking for toil in vain. The grim wolf Want
Was in my cottage, and I saw with tears,
That saved my soul from madness, how it ate
Fast from the unfed frames of those I loved
A feast of living flesh. I would not pain
You with the sad recital of my grief,
But for the sake of myriads in distress
I hope to touch the chord which makes all kin,
And to awake soul sympathy, which is
In man a sign of God, Whose name is love.

Brave in those days,
My wedded mate, the mother of my flock,
Her sharp privations bore. A famished babe
Clung to her milkless bosom, and about
Her feeble form the elder children cried,
"Oh, mother, give us bread!" Then she would kiss

Their burning tears away, sing holy hymns,
Tell tender stories such as children love,
And say, "My darlings, when dear dad comes home,
With us it will be well." Thus when at night
They heard the coming of their father's feet,
And ran to clasp me at the open door,
I thought my aching heart must burst to see
Their cruel disappointment; but I said,
"There will be labour soon." So then they crouched
Down on the hearth, and sobbed their souls to rest
About their mother's feet.

Often she strove
To cheer me with good words, but in my heart
A hate of life I would not have you know
Grew, and I said, in answer to her speech,
"Oh, my poor love, did I but half believe
This evil was the great All Father's will,
Then would I bend in this dread hour with thee
And humbly kiss the rod!" Why are men forced
From village homes and from the untilled land
To herd in cities, eat each other's hearts,
And suffer want like this? A spade's the key
Of Nature's storehouse; but the demon Dearth
Sits at the door triumphant while we starve,
Unwanted in the town.

Her wedding ring,
With many household idols, and the best
Of all our raiment, to appease the wolf
That held possession of our home, were gone,

And we together through the long cold nights
Shrank 'neath a scanty screen. Sleep to my eyes
Came not as when I climbed my chamber stairs
After a hard day's toil for daily bread;
Then unto me my weariness was as
A leaden serpent coiled about my bones,
That softly in my rest crept off, and slid
Unheard into oblivion. But at times
Dear dreams of Plenty to my bed would come,
And then my fancies fed on dainties rich
In glorious banquet halls.

Oft I have heard
The aged say we should our dreams reverse
If we would find their meaning, and in these
Dark hours, while wand'ring in sharp search for toil,
Too oft I thought them right. What at the feast
Of life was I beyond a crawling, poor,
Unwanted being? Guest I could not be,
For no man bade me eat. 'Tis sadly true
I saw abundance piled on every hand,
Yet unto me it was forbidden fruit,
Though Nature, yearning for its need, would say,
"That which thou wantest take. If thou wert born
A savage in the wood, thou needest not
Starve to thy death as now. Then at thy feet
The flying fowl, slain by thy dart, would fall,
And for thy pains fish in the stream be found
To satisfy thy need. Dost thou not know
The laws of Nature are the laws of God?
Obey them, man, and live."

With thoughts like these
Held I communion as I went my way,
Two idle friends between; to them I said,
"Oh, eager hands, that grow so soft and white,
Now that I am unwanted in the world,
What is the value of all strength and skill
With which ye are endowed? Ye unto me
Have, since the hours when first my toil began,
Been faithful ministers of needful good,
Unto my will obedient; but now,
Like me, ye are unwanted." Sick at heart,
Hard by a bridge which spans the murky Froom,
Bending above the wavering flood, I saw
The ponderous picture of a monster cloud,
That o'er the world hung in a light blue frame,
Like a vast field of lead; I could not help
Thinking how much my life was as the stream
Murmuring in its shade. But while I gazed
I saw the sun-flame through its great black heart
Burn out in beauty, and the grand star-king
In dazzling vesture through a glorious door
Looked out upon the world that, free from gloom,
Shone as a shriven soul.

Heavens! how sweet
Was that strange voice which in my being said,
"So through thy life-cloud shall a hand unseen
Open a door to joy!" Charmed by the thought,
A stranger smile about my sickly face
Played for a moment—then 'twas gone; but as
With better grace again I went my way

On through this desert which we call the town,
A second mercy at my feet I saw—
A fresh spring Primrose on a couch of mire
Lay smiling in my sight. What dost thou say—
"Only a Primrose?" Hush! Speak not so light.
Do you not know that from the house of Death
She in the front of millions more came out
To tell me happy news? Up from my heart
My wild joy leapt into my bursting eyes—
I was so rich and glad! What could I less
Than love the pretty prophetess of good
To all the idle poor who for their lives
On honest toil depend? Thus you may know
Why that I love, all other flowers beyond,
The soft moon-yellow Primrose.

SPRING FIRE.

"In the name of Spring and Beauty, up! awaken! pretty Prim,"
Said a sunbeam doing duty in a forest dingle dim;
"From the throne and territory of the great life-spirit, Fire,
I am here to be thy glory in the day of thy desire;
In the chariot of Aurora I have rode the hill-tops o'er
To the sepulchre of Flora, and I meet thee at the door;
Meet thee, beautiful new-comer, from the sunless house of death;
Meet thee, prophetess of Summer, with the honey-odoured breath;
To thy new life through the portal coming, as a soul in doubt,
Heaven sent, most gentle mortal, I am here to lead thee out.
Wilt thou let me, bonnie blossom? If thou wilt but give me room
In the heaven of thy bosom, I will banish all thy gloom.
Art thou of thy future fearful? I will aid thee in its strife;
I will make thee bright and cheerful; I will beautify thy life;

I will comfort, warm, and bless thee; I will be thy friend in need;
Thus my splendour shall possess thee; thus, dear Rose, I dare the deed."
Then this cherub, doing duty in a forest dingle dim,
Leapt into the breast of Beauty, whence the honey odours swim,
And such happiness came after, that the poets who are wise
Say the earth brake out in laughter, like the lands of Paradise;
For a thousand sweet love witches, rushing up to see the sight,
Sprang in mossy nooks and niches out to freedom, life and light;
And the sparrows, with their spouses, by the light she gave, begun
Building nice new summer-houses; and the snow made haste to run
To the valleys from the mountains; and the sunbeams, making glee,
Tore the ice-chains from the fountains, and the birds sang on the tree;
And this little sunny, single forest fairy, sweet and coy,
To the natives of the dingle was a glory, grace and joy.
So when happy thoughts come to you, as the sunbeam came to Rose,
They are angels sent to woo you, they will give your soul repose.

Sure as troubles leave their traces, sure as sunshine
follows rain,
Happy thoughts make happy faces; and when happiness
you gain,
It shall glorify your features, as the blossoms do the
sod,
It will cheer your fellow-creatures like the cherubim of
God;
It shall light despairing brothers to break down their
dungeon bars,
And your life shall be to others as the sun is to the
stars.

SPRING GUSHES.

Oh, this
Is the time
To win bliss
And weave rhyme;
For the green of the world has grown over the grime,
And Joy that I waited for, sighing forlorn,
As a lass for her love on a merrie May morn,
Is come, with her music, light, laughter, and flowers!
Awake! It is Spring in the land we call ours,
And, blithe as her birds, let us welcome the time
When the green of the world groweth over its grime.

The wet
Days of rain
That were met
With sore pain,
When winter came on us and labour was slain,
Are gone with their griefs to the far Nevermore;
And as a fair friend looking in at the door
To bid us Good-morrow, with smiles on her face,
Dear Hope has returned to our happy embrace.
Oh! angel Sun kissing
My mother Earth's brow,
All things that have life are
Made happier now!

Wherever we wander about o'er the land,
It is in the presence of Beauty we stand,
Delighting to worship her in the glad time
When the green and the gold are grown over the grime.

Out! Care,
Thou sad guest,
From thy lair,
In my breast;
My heart is in Spring as a singing dove's nest;
Lo! hence from thy kingdom, the city, afar
I dwell without thee, where the beautiful are—
The silvery rills in the valleys run calm,
Their song on the hills is subdued to a psalm,
And chattering children
Skip under the trees,
To gather bright blossoms
Beloved by the bees.
Oh! blithe treasure-hunters, the sin was mine own!
"Ah! why don't you love them and leave them alone!"
No, you cannot love them and leave them behind,
But something about them I want you to mind.
These sweet, pretty people,
That peep from their beds
Up at the grand star-king
High over their heads,
Were roused from their rest by a mandate divine—
They heard a voice say to them, "Rise up and shine,"
And lo! upon them as they spangle the sod
The light that is come is the glory of God!

I love
To sit down
In a grove
By the Down,
Afar from the din of the turbulent town,
When warm winds are wending their way with the breath
Of elegant multitudes risen from death,
And birdies are singing on boughs newly clad,
Because 'tis the time when all things should be glad.
I listen unto them
Till I have no care,
Save love in my heart for
All things that are fair;
And while that I listen, amid a sweet swarm
Of light-loving beauties that breathe me a charm,
My heart as a flower that opens in Spring
Is opened by Beauty, and memories sing.

The skies
Are cloud-clear
As the eyes
Of a dear
Maid I met in a spring when my summer drew near,
And nearer to heaven the world that we ride
Seems sailing along in a sunnier tide,
And closer to heaven my spirit is drawn,
As a lark to the sun from its nest on the lawn.
Ah! wonder you why
I believe it is so?
It was in a spring
Of my life long ago,

While thus I reclined on a summery slope,
With a maiden I loved and a beautiful hope;
And while to the maiden my love was confest,
A white dove from Heaven flew down to her breast;
Then, while in her soft eyes I sought a love-sign,
The dove from her bosom flew forth into mine.

Oh, sweet,
Glad, and gay
As the feet
Of fair May
Coming over the hills on her merriest day,
Are these darling dreams of the day when a dove
Flew into my heart through the eyes of my love!
And ever to me when the Spring Queen appears
The darling dreams come, till up out of warm tears
I weep in Love's winter
Bright rainbows are grown,
And blossoms sit blooming where sorrow had sown.
Then with these dear dreams of a maiden I knew,
With eyes so cloud-clear and of heaven's bright blue,
I sing to the ring of a sweet-running rhyme,
"The green of my life has grown over the grime."
So if, loving good, unto good we live nigh,
The good over evil will bloom bye-and-bye.

TO A BEAUTY OUT OF PLACE.

SEPTEMBER, and a Primrose here!
  When was a floral beauty found
So out of place as this, my dear,
  Blooming above our garden ground?
My sight, indeed, I almost doubt;
Sweet Prim! whatever brought you out?

Quaint little Rose, to me you seem
  Just like a frightened child, that has
Been startled by a wicked dream
  Out of the sleep in which it was
Laid by a gentle mother's care;
So up in bed you sit and stare.

Lie down and sleep again, sweet thing
  Whatever woke you up so soon?
You should not rise till it is spring;
  And here we have our harvest moon
Lighting the bed you shine above;
Lie down and sleep your sleep, my love.

You could not rest, so you got up;
  Was it to drink? Abrim with rain
The autumn clouds have filled your cup;
  Won't you go off to sleep again?
A wonder 'tis that to your tomb
Dame Nature doth not call you home.

I can't tell how I love you, but
  You look so strange and quaint that I
Could wish you in your chamber shut,
  Until the wintertide went by;
So much you seem, despite your grace
Like beauty out of time and place.

THE DEPARTURE OF FLORA.

Because it is the evening of the year,
My thoughts are not all happy, as they are
When the daisies in the meadow first appear,
And the fading time of Flora is afar.

I sit among them looking on the face
Of a weary woman withering away,
Like the blushing rose that glorified her grace
On the morning of our merry marriage day.

Ah! whither shall I hasten from the thought
That, as I held her yellowed hand in mine,
With sorrow for the ruin time had wrought,
I was gazing on a solemn parting sign?

I wander from the city sorrow-bowed,
It is to meet a mercy named heart's ease;
The land lies in a covering of cloud,
The birds are sitting silent on the trees;

The breath of Death is blowing in the blast,
The earth is as a body growing cold,
The summer days are over, and the last
Of her flowers 'tis a pity to behold.

I halted by a cottage garden wall,
Where the beautiful were given to Decay,
And sadly, as I listened to their call,
I heard a voice within my being say:

"We cannot, pretty people of the sod,
Keep you with us any longer if we try,
And you say to us, whilst going home to God,
There is nothing born too beautiful to die.

"Darling flowers! when we saw you coming out,
We were glad your charming company to win;
But our love of you was never more devout
Than the grief with which we see you going in."

DROOPING.

Again the autumn days are here,
And sadly 'neath a clouded sky
I sing a lay of love and fear,
Lest I should lose thee, Oh, my dear!
When that I pass away or die,
As the red leaves that from the trees
Are hurried by the busy breeze
Unto the earth, ah! even so
To us the time will come to go;
For on the tree of life we are,
As leaves on which the yellow scar
Of the destroyer Time is seen;
And we, my love, beyond the green
Are grown together. When we part,
Where shall we meet again, sweetheart?
Will Sleep eternal hold us fast
In chains that will for ever last?

Shall we die as the leaves that fall,
And in the chamber of Decay
Shall I no more awake to call
Thee my dear own? This autumn day
I see thee fading from my sight,
As one that travelleth away
Afar into the dusky light
Of even, and 'twill soon be night.

Oh, where within its awful shade,
Where will our meeting-place be made,
Will it be in the earth we tread?
Shall we, or shall we not, be dead?

It is a thought from which I shrink,
  Yet must I look it in the face,
Although it runs me to the brink
  Of madness from thy kind embrace,
And hurls me down the black abyss
Of black Oblivion from thy kiss,
For ever and for ever—no!
It cannot be, it is not so;
Death cannot slay the angel Love:
Love is immortal; Love will move
Us, by the grace of God, her Sire,
To reach the heaven we desire.

A GARDEN OF SLEEP.

O Sabbath-eve! as sweet as ever came
In summer splendour through the western gate
Of this fair star's pavilion! Happy Eve
Looks from her palace window to salute
God's eldest wonder, light; and now she faints
In his illustrious presence. All the west
Blooms with magnificence. O King of day!
Retreating to thy chamber, hast thou not
Shattered thy splendid lamp on the tall top
Of yonder silver mountain? The blue wold
Is all ablaze with glory. 'Tis the time
When meditation leads us to her bower;
And that dear passion we have christened Love,
Kindles her thrilling fire. Yet I have trod
Our "Bridge of Sighs" in this delightful hour,
To gossip with sad thoughts; and now I sit
Beneath a yew-tree in this silent town,
Whose awful chief is Death. I did presume
That Grief would meet me here alone; but Griet
Walks hand-in-hand with Flora through this rest
Of vernal elegance. I have not dreamt
Of such a lovely dell this side of heaven
As Arno's fragrant valley. O my soul,
How beautifully life and death are blent

In this rare crucible: this holy land
Is almost like the hollow of His hand
From whom all blessings rain. Delicious thoughts
Float through my mind as flocks of summer doves
That gambol in the sun-blaze. But I know
There will be clouds betwixt this light and me;
There will be partings, penalties, and pains,
Memory's impeachment, and my soul's regret
For work undone, before I come to sleep
In the quiet dingle colonized by Death
From yonder sin-plagued city. Oh, how kind
Is He that will not leave us in the grave,
Yet from His ways like poor lost sheep we stray,
Led by our ruling passions. Far too well
I know a pair that wandered from His fold;
Then the Good Shepherd sent His servant, Death,
To take the pet lamb from the mother's heart,
That they might follow after and return,
Depending on His mercy. In this glen
I see a daisied slope on which we wept
Because the lamb was ours—God's will be done.
I am full loth to leave this graceful spot;
Yet I shall come full soon enough to stay;
And it may be too soon; to be forgot
By all but Him that gives and takes away.
See! round the tenements of those we loved,
How beauty's roses blossom.—Grief appears
As a pale spirit of this sacred grove;
She waters them to life with her warm tears;
And then, like beauty's lips, the earth doth part;

And here such smiles play o'er the sleeper's face,
And such a throng of graces wake to life,
That I can see around thy scythe, O Death,
A sacred wreath of roses, wound by Love.
He that would steal one flower from this fair shrine,
Would strip a corse, and condescend to rob
Corruption's dismal workshop.

DYING DAISIES.

See, my darling, how these tender
Little sun-sick beauties lie,
Shorn of grace and spoiled of splendour,
On their Mother Earth to die.
Yesterday we gave them praises,
Now we pity them and say,
"Lack-a-day!
We shall droop, and, as the daisies,
Pass away."

Darling daisies! as I watch you
Fading, in my heart I have
Pity that from death would snatch you,
If I had the power to save;
But while by your bed I linger,
To my love I hear you cry,
"Ah! good-bye;
Fate has marked us with her finger—
We must die!"

Farewell, daisies! swiftly sinking;
As I bend your death-bed o'er,
I can feel a hand unlinking
Life from mine for evermore;
Long we may not live to mind you,
In the paths our fathers trod
To the sod;
We are coming just behind you,
Home to God.

SONG TO OCTOBER.

Hail! holy October, congenial and kind;
To me, with the glare of the summer behind,
So calmly thou comest that thou art most dear;
Hail! holy October, sweet eve of the year.

A spirit of peace from the heavens above
Inhabits the world, and her mission of love
Is kindly and gently unto us to say,
All things to their future are passing away.

How tenderly telling the truth to us all,
She leadeth, and lifteth us down to our fall;
The hair groweth grey, and the leaf groweth brown,
While soft as to slumber she leadeth us down.

The world clouds above us swim slowly along,
And of all the birds that were merry with song,
In temples of Sylvia, whence Flora has flown,
Rare little red robin now singeth alone.

Alone in the wood, with a song in its mouth,
When summer is gone to the land of the south,
It stayeth, and singeth, and will not depart,
Like hopes that flew forth from their nest in my heart,

I fret not for them in these dear autumn days,
Any more than the wind for the flower it slays;
The spirit of peace, that pervadeth all things,
So shutteth me up from all care in its wings.

The winds in the woods seem all holding their breath,
Like people that stand in the presence of death;
While, low at the foot of the russet-robed beech,
I listen to sermons the yellow leaves preach.

THE BARD'S REQUEST.

Give me wine, that I may drink,
To the bottom from the brink,
Death unto the thoughts I think;
As the dry earth drinks the rain,
Let me drink to drown their pain.

Give me music while it flows,
Wilder than the wind that blows
When the tall trees rock their boughs;
To the sweet swirl of its sound
Let the rosy wine run round.

More than this my life to cheer
Need I crave while I am here?
Give me something twice as dear,
Give to me, all else above,
This—a faithful woman's love.

GERTIE GRAY.

Though I never came to woo,
  Though I never, never may,
Even as the angels do,
Let me love thee, ever love thee,
  Dearly love thee, Gertie Gray.

Though upon thy brow of snow
  Kiss of mine may never lay,
Happy I shall be to know
Thou art happy, always happy,
  Ever happy, Gertie Gray.

All the life I have to live
  I will for thy pleasure pray,
If to me you will but give
Just a mem'ry, a kind mem'ry,
  A fond mem'ry, Gertie Gray.

Other arms enfold thee fast
  From my heart, alas! away;
But so long as life will last,
I must love thee, I will love thee,
  Dearly love thee, Gertie Gray.

THE SABBATARIAN'S REBUKE.

FREE from the chains of toil and care, is it a sin to be
Breathing the sunny Sabbath air beneath this hawthorn tree?
Will Christ endorse the bigot's ban who dares me to partake
A feast of mercies, made for man, when the spring blossoms wake?

All the long week, that I may pay my passage to the tomb,
I toil and spin my life away, nor murmur at my doom.
If hither, then, I come to seek the health for which I pine,
Say what commandment do I break of origin divine?

Ye that may worship when ye will where woods with blossoms flame,
How can ye doom my soul to ill in Mercy's holy name?
Is it for you the spring flowers live, raised by the hand Divine,
When you cannot to beauty give a purer love than mine?

Is it for you the fragrant thorn puts on her raiment gay?
Is it for you the angel Morn flings back the gates of day?

Is it with you the birds rejoice in songs from sorrow free?
If you with them would lift your voice, why would you hinder me?

Is it for you that fountains flow in music o'er the land?
For you that cool sea-breezes blow o'er shining amber sand?
For you that in the whole year round the Father's mercies fall,
And for a life to labour bound no pleasure left at all?

If you can read in Nature's book and learn its golden lore,
Pray let me at the pictures look—you cannot love them more.
I may not see so wondrous well, but he is wrong who tries
To scare me with a threat of hell from good he loves likewise.

A SABBATH MATIN.

I AM from Labour's fetters free,
I am without my week-day care,
I am where I delight to be—
Breathing the balmy Sabbath air.

I am not here, O Lord! alone,
But at Thy footstool humbly wait;
My eyes are raised towards Thy throne,
And I am nought, as Thou art great.

Thy footstool is a glorious globe;
Thou fillest all the realms of space,
Thou givest morn her shining robe,
And to the rose its scent and grace.

Thou carest for the tribes that swim
In every sparkling drop of dew;
Thy hand hath formed the ocean's rim;
Thou dost from death all life renew.

Thou sendest all the countless host
Of stars in their tremendous flight;
In Thy great life all time is lost,
As darkness in the sun-flood's light.

Thy mercies, Lord, make me full glad;
Yet, if I love Thee all my days,
I cannot to Thy greatness add,
Or swell Thy glory with my praise.

Praise is the sweetest flower that blows
Out of the mind that thrills the clod;
And as the soft winds stir the rose,
So prayer doth move Thy mind, O God.

SWEETBRIER.

You say you are coming to see me,
And ask with the grace of a king,
As if from all care you could free me,
Pray what would you like me to bring?
'Tis but a poor exile's desire,
Whose life to its winterhood wanes:
Do bring up a sprig of sweetbrier
To me from the dear Devon lanes.

I love all the flowers that throng them,
Though far from their homes I have flown;
My memories revel among them,
And fondly I call them mine own.
The hope of a soul may soar higher,
For joys that are followed by banes;
But give me a sprig of sweetbrier,
With love, from the dear Devon lanes.

The past is a book I am reading,
And while in my sight it appears,
I scent the sweetbrier leaves bleeding,
And freshen them up with my tears.
Ah! Hope to its heaven sang nigher,
And freer from thought that profanes,
When I gathered a maiden sweetbrier
Adown in the dear Devon lanes.

THE ROBIN'S SYMPATHY.

Oh, blessed bird! that to the dying flowers
So kindly singeth in these holy hours,
Thou art unto my fancy most unwise,
A comer from the groves of Paradise
Unto these pretty people of the sod,
Chanting a call to come and stay with God,
Till the sweet season when the snow-robed king
Whom we call Winter is dethroned by Spring.
Thus, then, oh, blessed bird! from dull decay
I hear thee singing their sweet souls away;
And though I have a great pain in my heart
When that I see the beautiful depart,
Thou dost so soothe it with thy tender song
That I could love such pain all my life long.

Not unto them alone thy song must be;
Thou dost, dear minstrel, from thy heart for me
Pour forth the charming stream, and to thy psalm,
Mid the soft breathing blossoms, in the calm,
I bend and listen, till I hear them say,
"As we are going you will fade away;"
And while I list their parting words unto,
I have within my heart a wish to go
And be at rest for ever. Is it wrong,
Oh, gentle bird! that from thy pensive song

So sad a wish should wake? Then must I weep
To Christ for pardon; but when my death-sleep
Stealeth upon me, shall I not be blest,
If with such music I am sung to rest?
If that I have but one glad hope to sing
Such sweet love-carols for my comforting,
I shall without regret forsake this poor
Old time-worn temple I shall need no more.

TO-MORROW.

WHERE, O my muse, is the maid we call Morrow, for
Whom we live looking because it is said,
She will bring hither the things that we sorrow for,
Where shall we meet this most marvellous maid?

Who is he that hath not cherished the name of her?
Where for a clasp of her arms shall I run—
Over a rosy star, filled with the fame of her
Beauty, most mystical under the sun?

What is she? Whence is she? Ere she is born to us,
How is it that for her coming we cry
Ever the same, even when a new morn to us
Flasheth her banner of light on the sky?

As a blithe nightingale out in a bowery
Forest of foliage, singeth unseen,
When the earth blossoms sleep under the flowery
Heavens above them, to me she hath been.

Forth from the kingdom of youth I have sped for her,
Far away down in the valley of flowers,
Passionate tears of my soul I have shed for her
On the warm hearts of the fawn-footed hours.

Heavens! what sunnysome stories were told of her
In that far fairyland, whence to the chase
Sprang my fleet fancies, that nearly caught hold of her
Gossamer garments I longed to embrace!

In that sweet "long ago," while I lay listening,
Low in the lap of love, were not my joys
Gathered from gleams of her gaieties glistening,
And from her jingle of trinketry toys?

Castles of comfort, with bowers imbosoming—
Haunts of the angels that trip from above
To their inhabitants—laden with blossoming
Orange-boughs, fresh from the orchards of love.

Crowns for the brave and delights for the dutiful,
Shed from her coffers upon us their beams;
Wedding-rings flash in her hands for the beautiful
Daughters of mother Earth, charmed by her dreams.

All things for all of us that we may ever win,
Hath not the All Father hid in her store?
Unto new worlds, which our wild thoughts were never in,
Will not the maid Morrow open the door?

I mind a time when in pleasant pursuit of her,
With a gay lass on a summery slope,
Fondly we feasted our love with the fruit of her
Honey-sweet apples, presented by Hope.

"What unto us will the merry maid Morrow bring?"
Spake my Delight; and I answered her thus:
"She will not bear us good cause to be sorrowing
While the Lord giveth such love unto us."

Out from that pleasant past as we went hurrying:
We have met mercies with miseries mixed,
Robes for the bridal and robes for the burying,
Cradles and coffins, and all things betwixt.

Dear were the dreams of great gifts she was bringing me;
Where, O my muse, does the maid Morrow stay?
Did you not hear the glad song Hope sat singing me
All through the life of my dead Yesterday?

Ah! my dead Yesterday; though she is gone to her
Place in the past, where our Morrows must meet,
When she was going she beckoned me on to her;
Dying, she left to me legacies sweet.

Out of my present, too, sadly I follow her;
But while I dream of a heaven ahead,
Is not the world of its joy growing hollower?
Walk I not wearily home to my bed?

Grey I am grown while I sought for the bliss of her
Coming; and when we are wedded at last,
I shall be slain to my death by the kiss of her,
I shall be coffined away in my past.

This unto you is my song of To-morrow, for
Whom we are looking, because it is said
She will bring hither the gifts that we sorrow for;
This is my lay of the marvellous maid.

IN REMEMBRANCE.

The weary maid is sleeping;
The heart that loved me best,
Hath ceased for me its beating:
My love is gone to rest.
Sweet lips are cold and silent,
Fond eyes no joy impart;
Last night Death came a-wooing,
And bore her from my heart.

When those that loved her dearly
Were kneeling round her bed,
He came into her chamber,
With whom her sweet soul fled;
Softly she smiled to meet Him,
And yet she wept to part;
Last night Death came a-wooing
The idol of my heart.

A FACE.

THERE is a face I often see in dreams,
And even when I sit with open eyes,
Pondering on my past: it is a face
A loving mem'ry in my heart hath hid
From the destroyer Time, and even Death,
Of a fair village maid, in Devon born;
And when I saw it first I was a poor
Apprentice lad, walking one Sabbath day,
For health or pleasure, through my native town,
To which she from her village home came in;
And such a face in all my little life
I had not seen before. It was a face
That thrilled my being with delicious light—
A throne whereon gay Love with Beauty sat,
Laughing among the roses. I could not
Paint a pure picture of that happy face,
More than a singing lark could truly tell
The reason of its bliss. I only know
That in her witching eyes a sunny soul
Sat shining on my own, and that my life
Grew full of pleasure, by her presence made.

A WOOING.

From the sorrow, strife, and sin
Of the city we are in,
Come, my love, and let us flee
To a cottage I have found,
Where we will so happy be
As the birds that sit around,
To each other on the trees,
Singing merrie melodies.

If we in the town abide,
Can we then from evil hide,
O my love, so safe and well
As we with each other may
Where the soft-voiced wood-doves dwell?
Good it is that we should stray
To a nest from harm secure,
Where the winds blow fresh and pure.

All the city, gay and fine,
Hath not such a charming shrine
As a cottage I have seen,
Hidden in a pleasant place,
Peeping through a leafy screen,
For the coming of your grace.
By the beauty of my bride
Let it then be glorified,

STAR DREAMS.

STRAIGHT to the chamber my darlings lay sleeping in,
Out of the blue heavens when it was night,
I saw the rays of a sunny star creeping in,
And to sweet slumber I sank in their light.

Soft through my lattice-bars came the thin beams to me,
And I believe—this sweet fancy I love—
That out of heaven a fair flock of dreams to me,
Sailed on the star-beams that streamed from above.

Round a soft sleep-haunt wherein I lay listening
Came the sweet star-dreams in glorious attire;
Fairer it was than fine gossamer glistening,
When it shines, lit by the morning sun fire.

Light on my ear as the rose hears the pattering
Feet of rich summer rain bringing her bliss,
Heard I the voices of star-visions chattering,
And of their parent star saying like this:

"It is a love beacon set by the shining shore
Of the soul's Eden to show thee the way,
Up from world-care to the rest thou art pining for,
And to the joy that shall never decay.

"While in this vale of tears sad thou art tarrying,
There is a fond spirit waiting for thee;
We are but beams of a lamp she was carrying
Down to the beach of the heaven-kissed sea."

In the sweet spell of soft slumber enthralling me
I heard a voice I had heard when a boy;
It was the soul of my dead mother calling me
Up to the home of her infinite joy.

So when the days of my sorrow creep drearily
Over the earth to their tomb in the west,
I hear the voice of her love, never wearily,
Calling me home to the beautiful rest.

And as a rose in her heart feels the pattering
Feet of soft summer rain giving her bloom,
So in my heart I was charmed by the chattering
Thoughts of the star-dreams that haunted my room.

A CAROL FROM A COUNTRY LANE.

FROM my city labour and my city sorrows free,
Here I am, a rover where that I delight to be,
Out among the beautiful—out among the grand,
Green and golden glories of my merrie motherland.
Bounding o'er her bosom, as a brooklet from its spring,
All among her blossom, for the love of her I sing.
Where is there another land, in all this world of ours,
Lovely as my motherland, wrapt in her robe of flowers?

I linger in the lonesome lanes, to hear the linnets sing
Unto their mates in fairy fanes, amid the blossoming;
Adown the slopes of healthy hills, along the vale to glide,
I greet the rills in flossy frills, and hunt them where they hide.
O'er roots of vines in dim ravines I see them softly crawl,
Gathering strength to fling their length adown the waterfall.
They loiter in the purling ponds to sprinkle with their spray
The pretty plumes and feath'ry fronds of ferns that grace their way;
They give their looks to mossy nooks, where, on a seat of sedge,
The kingcups camp along the swamp upon its lowest edge.

Where lilies gleam and blow and beam upon their bosoms bright,
I stay to weave them in my theme, and worship with delight.

Great pity in my heart I have for all the folks in town ;
I wish that I could sing them off into the country down.
For freely to them in this place, where peace with beauty thrives,
I feel that God would give them grace to beautify their lives ;
It would be good as angels' food, and such a blessed balm,
If they could flee their care with me into the country calm.
Amid the sweet bewitching things that in my haunt abound,
From all my grief I have relief, and tread enchanted ground ;
And while it is my joy to rove the beautiful among,
My bosom beats with a new love that hath its vent in song.

To Beauty leal, I fondly feel I have of it a part :
The birds and streams are singing dreams of heaven in my heart ;
The flowers give to me their grace, and with the angel Health
To meet me in this pleasant place, I ask no other wealth.
I care not for the city fine—I loathe the city strife ;
Let the green country lanes be mine, and mine a purer life.

Here on my merrie mother's breast, within this woody wild,
I am beside her gladsome guest—I am her cheerful child.
It is no shame that I should bend and kiss her blooming brow :
Oh, my majestic motherland, how beautiful art thou !
I feel thy charms like loving arms about my being laid ;
Of all thy wonders I behold I do not feel afraid.

I feel upon me raining from the fervent sun above
The kisses thou art gaining for the waking-up of Love.
Oh, what a buxom bride thou art to thy celestial Lord !
Thy heart is thrill'd and over-fill'd with good he doth afford.
Unto thy daughter Flora he doth give her grace and breath ;
He charmeth thy sweet children up from the low lap of Death.
Why should I to the shadow go, his warm caress to miss ?
I would climb up to meet him like the daring clematis ;
But with thy dainty daisies down upon thy breast to hide,
In sweet content with pleasure sent, my soul is satisfied.

WHAT THE FLOWERS SAY.

I LOVE to think, when I behold these splendid
Care-charming beauties of our land—the flowers,
How that their grace might with our lives be blended,
And how their beauties may be blent with ours.

I often halt among them in my walking,
And while I bend their charmful forms above,
I fancy that I hear their sweet souls talking,
Just in this fashion, to my list'ning love :

"Here on the land in our grand garments shining,
We are but children of the dust, and we
Into the earth shall pass for our refining,
Soon as the Father wills that it may be.

"The autumn hours will only come to put us
Off to our slumber in good time, and thus
Wrong it would be to chide the hands that shut us
Away from evil that might come to us.

"We shall not see corruption in our slumber,
We shall not in our grave be left forlorn ;
Soon as our resting days have run their number,
We to new beauty shall again be born."

INCOMPLETE.

What is complete
In all this little life, through which we run
With flying feet,
Unto a future that we cannot shun,
And a new life that hope would have more sweet?

We only know
That we are passing through a world of change;
As buds that blow
Run into fruit, so to a state most strange
We from our present forms are born to grow.

God with the seed
Giveth unto all life, by His great grace,
Strength for its need,
To lift it upwards to its destined place,
And fitting food on which it hath to feed.

The way I ran,
Forth from the kingdom of my youth unto
A grey-grown man,
Showeth me not how far I have to go
Out of this life, nor when that life began.

What I shall be
After the awful hours when Death I meet,
I cannot see;
I have this faith wherewith to comfort me—
God, in His time, will make all things complete.

THE LONELY TOWER.

THERE is a tower upon a hill,
That standeth straight, and standeth still,
A thousand feet beyond the reach
Of breakers brawling on the beach,
As ever a tower of stone can stand
On a tall turret of lofty land;
'Twas built a friend and guide to be,
That sailors sailing o'er the sea
Might know the coast, and steer awide
From where it standeth in its pride.
I know not of its age the tale,
But as I halted in the vale,
Down at the foot of its high throne,
I never saw a tower so lone;
And even now I seem to find
Its picture painted on my mind.

Wrapt in a rusty gown of grime,
Alone it stood, so stern and tall,
Casting a scornful scowl at all
The strength of the destroyer Time!
And even thus it seemed to shout
To all its foes this challenge out:
"I am not of your might afraid;
I need no friend, I ask no aid:

Come on, ye years that are afar;
I dare ye all with me to war!
Beat, rains, upon me! Rave, O storm,
About my weather-beaten form!
Hurl on my brow your thunder straight!
Flash lightning o'er my seaside throne!
In my own strength for you I wait:
Here I will stand and fall alone!"

Because I knew its pride was vain,
I looked upon the sight with pain,
And from my heart this cry went forth:
"What will thy monster might be worth
When thou upon the earth art cast
Out of thy being and thy past?
Thus I among the human crowd
Have met a spirit stern and proud,
Scornful of friendship, hard and cold,
That in its might hath cried, 'Behold!
Here in my strength I stand alone!'
And yet they fell! O tower of stone,
As sailors sailing on the sea
Are from their danger warned by thee,
They lived to warn us from a state
In which their lives lay desolate;
And in their pride, without a friend,
They broke, they fell, and found their end!"

THE JOYS OF SIGHT.

GLORIOUS in this midnight noon
Is the full, round harvest moon,
Climbing up so bright and high
In the great world-clasping sky!
Like a globe of silver hurled
From the great Creator's hand,
Out in air, above the world,
So it sails around the land;
Soft and mellow, white and warm,
'Mid the stars, a sunny swarm,
Charming in this midnight noon
Is the fair mirth-making moon.

As I sit among the flow'rs,
In a garden we call ours,
With this midnight still and calm,
I can feel a flood of balm
Lightly raining on my brow;
And I am so happy now,
That its loss would give me pain.
Oh, how good it is to gain
Freedom from the care of day
In this sweet and quiet way!
All the heavens seem to be
Fondly making love to me.

Lady Moon, the world above,
While thy kisses wake my love
For the Father God, I find
Gladness that I am not blind.
If I had not sight to see,
How could I thus happy be?
All these wonders high in air,
All that on the earth is fair,
All that doth my eyes delight
In the hours of day or night,
Are not greater wonders than
Sight which God hath given man.

LINES TO A BROTHER SINGER,

ON THE RECEIPT FROM HIM OF STANZAS SUNG IN PRAISE OF MY FAVOURITE FLOWER, THE PRIMROSE.

SWEET thanks, brother bard, from my heart for thy good
Sunny, soul-stirring song to a charm of the wood!
No beauty, awaking from winter's repose,
Engages my love like the moon-yellow rose.

I loved them in boyhood, and gave them a song,
When roving the lanes of Devonia along;
And so, brother bardie, do let me propose
To love you for loving my favourite rose.

I loved them in manhood, and once found a bud
Smiling up in my face from the city street mud;
I could not forget the delight if I chose
I felt at the sight of that little lone rose.

That prophet of summer, in winterland met,
Is a joy of my life, and fond memory's pet;
Good cheer for my sorrow, and balm for my woes,
Are mine when I think on that peace-making rose.

But better and sweeter than beauties beside
Are those that in beautiful Devon abide:
I pray, gentle friend, give my love unto those;
For you sing like a lark of my pretty spring rose.

HEART BALM.

As after the showers the flowers appear,
All sweeter, and fresher, and fairer, my dear,
So thou from this sorrow to joy shall arise,
With hope in thy heart and its light in thine eyes.

Sigh no more, weary soul, for the joy that is past!
The lily, that bends to the blow of the blast,
Shall live when the King of the Forest lies slain,
To smile in the sunshine that follows the rain.

The days coming downward have mercies in store;
The pain that is sharpest will soonest be o'er;
Look up, and arise to the life which is new;
Take faith to thy heart, and bid sorrow adieu.

The storm will be over, the cloud will be rent;
And if that a message to heaven be sent,
As dew from the daisies, the meadow above,
Thy tears shall be dried in a summer of love.

Oh, what is the service of sorrow so sad?
For the good there is joy, there is hope for the bad;
For the bees, when they seek where the honey herbs call,
There is treasure to hive, and there's love for us all.

Can we hope for joy if to sadness we give
The fast-flying moments of life that we live?
By patiently searching, we find hidden springs;
And butterflies wait for the growth of their wings.

We oftentimes say, though we do not believe,
The sun from the earth is a truant at eve;
But 'tis from the sun to her star-curtain'd bed
The earth with her children departeth instead.

So if that we wander away from the light
Of faith in the Father, 'twill sure to be night;
And if, like the earth, with her dewy-wet face,
We turn unto Him, He will give us His grace.

IN MEMORY OF THE DEAR DEAD.

Oh, thou lost idol of my heart,
Since home to God thy purest part,
  Thy loving spirit, flew,
Years, long dark years, have crept away,
And life, that was with thee all May,
Grows loveless as thy robe of clay,
  Grave-hidden from my view.

Pleasure, my bosom thou hast fled;
Stern Sorrow reigneth in thy stead,
  Supreme in Reason's hall.
Oh, empty heart, to ruin flung,
Thy hopes are dead! their knell is rung,
And memory's mournful ivy hung
  About thy broken wall.

Heaven! how drear this world is grown
Since thou hast with the angels flown,
  Soul of my Mary, kind!
The lark above my chamber sings,
As from its chain a spirit springs;
But I am one with broken wings,
  Left on the earth behind.

Here all forlorn, alas! I sit,
Watching the young spring grass-blades knit
A counterpane of green
Over a bed where thou dost sleep
A dreamless slumber, in the deep,
Cold, hollow earth, whence daisies peep,
And grace thy emerald screen.

Glad I should be to see them rise,
But through my tear-beclouded eyes
On them I look with pain.
Oh, daisies! on this holy pile
'Tis well that you should sit and smile;
Ye know not how I weep the while
For the dear dead, in vain!

SEA-SIDE MUSINGS.

Say, mortal, hast thou heard
  The vast and mighty sea
Wailing for forms that are interred
Beneath its breast, which seemeth stirred
  By souls in misery;
    Heaving up and down,
    Swaying to and fro,
Singing a song for a mournful throng
  In the graveyard down below?

Many are those that stay
  Far from their cheerless homes;
Never a mourner came that way
To pay the debt of love, or pray
  Beside their nameless tombs.
    Heaving up and down,
    Swaying to and fro:
Listen! the swell is ringing a knell
  For sleepers down below.

The brave sea-boy is there,
  And he that grasped the helm,
When the sky was black as a soul's despair,
And death was hov'ring in the air
  Above that briny realm.

Heaving up and down,
Swaying to and fro:
Ever the surge is chanting a dirge
For loved ones down below.

There beauty's softest lock
Is braided thick and fast
With flowers, weeds, and gems that stock
Cavern, cave, or pillar of rock,
In the ocean garden vast.
Heaving up and down,
Swaying to and fro,
Singing the bass at a solemn mass
For the bleaching dead below.

There the fisherman lies,
Whose love, on the lone cliff,
Stood gazing through her tearful eyes,
When she heard the hurricane rise
That swamped her lover's skiff.
Heaving up and down,
Swaying to and fro:
She looks in vain, for the cruel main
Is keeping him down below.

O sea, of trouble full,
Up from their dreamless beds
Why liftest thou each eyeless skull,
As if they heard the wild sea-gull
Screaming above their heads?

Heaving up and down,
Rocking to and fro,
On pillars hard, in that graveyard,
Thy restless waves below.

Gave death to thee no bands?
Lo! on their prison floor
Of brown and spangled shifting sands
They seem to beat with their white hands,
The measure of thy roar.
Heaving up and down,
Whilst my sad tears flow,
Singing a psalm, in the evening calm,
For captives down below.

Lovest thou not to keep
Treasures of flesh and blood
From aching hearts and eyes that weep?
Tell me, thou woeful, wailing deep,
And melancholy flood;
Sobbing in thy ebb,
Throbbing in thy flow,
For many a brave in that broad grave,
Thy folding shroud below!

A JOY OF THE SPRING TIME.

See! to this temple which we call our world,
And to our island home, and to our love,
The angel Spring is come! Our mother Earth
Is thrilled with life anew! Out of her heart,
And from the sepulchre in which they slept
Until their resurrection, a grand host
Rush out in beauty wondrous. Glory be
To God, the great World-Builder, for this joy
And for the gift of sight! I should be less
In His creation than the least of all
Who breathe in human form the breath of life
If in my heart no grateful thought was found,
Outbursting into praise. Hearken! what glee
The flitting sparrows with their merry mates
Make round our chamber chimney! Even while
I sit at labour in my dingy room,
Clothing, for daily bread, the feet of men,
My heart leaps with delight, so good it is
To hear their charming chatter!

A PSALM OF LIFE.

O SOUL of mine, sob not so loud;
  Hast thou not wept too long?
What though we walk beneath a cloud,
  Let 's break it with a song.
Though want may bare thy prison wall,
  And hurl the shafts of pain,
From Fate's black clouds bright flowers fall—
  And 't will not always rain.

Come, soul of mine, do thou be brave,
  Shoulder thy load once more;
Short is thy journey to the grave,
  The strife will soon be o'er.
Though life's wild waves roll rough and high,
  Be firm and front the blast;
God's whirlwinds lift us to the sky—
  And 't will not always last.

Up! soldier soul, to arms, and cope
  With all thou durst not shun;
From the cold sepulchre of hope,
  Arise, and greet the sun.
The future on her dark cheek wears
  A golden bar of light;
God's angels sing on heaven's stairs—
  And 't is not always night.

THE OLD YEAR'S END: 1898.

Ten minutes left of 'ninety-eight!
Ten grains of golden sand,
Ten swift-winged birds that will not wait,
Ten gifts from Mercy's hand.
Ten serpents gliding through the grass,
Ten brittle threads to twine,
Ten marks on life's highway to pass—
No, no—'tis only nine.

Nine minutes left of 'ninety eight!
Nine flakes of melting snow,
Nine vessels with an unknown freight,
Nine secrets yet to know,
Nine angels in each other's train,
Nine ministers of fate,
Nine links of one eternal chain—
No, no—'tis only eight.

Eight minutes of the old year's life!
Eight bubbles on a stream,
Eight loads of joy, or eight of strife,
Eight phases of a dream.
Eight gems to save, eight toys to crush
Eight blessings to be given,
Eight song-birds singing in one bush—
No, no—'tis only seven.

Seven little minutes left to count!
Seven arrows in full flight,
Seven of hope's ladder bars to mount,
Seven mercies in my sight.
Seven of hope's roses in their bloom,
Seven tears and smiles to mix,
Seven grave-bound pilgrims walking home—
No, no—'tis only six.

Six atoms of one little whole,
Six wonders to unseal,
Six paces nearer to my goal,
Six chances more to kneel.
Six pages of a volume vast,
Six boons for souls that strive,
Six tapers burning in a blast—
No, no—'tis only five.

Five minutes gone! oh, hearts of all,
Five minutes left to beat;
Five bearers of the old year's pall,
Five mercies yet to meet.
Five less to watch, five more to miss,
Five treasures yet in store;
Five cups of pain, and five of bliss—
No, no—'tis only four.

Four trifles of a golden thread,
Four atoms of a day,
Four windings in the path we tread,
Four torches by the way.

Four flying phantoms of the past,
  Four voices in one glee,
Four sailors clinging to a mast—
  No, no—'tis only three.

Three mighty prophets sent to preach
  Three sermons for our weal,
Three apples on a dead sea-beach,
  Three turnings of a wheel.
Three rills to cross, three hills to climb
  Three stages to pursue,
Three spectres from the grave of time—
  No, no—'tis only two.

Two torrents down a mountain gorge,
  Two wind wails wandering by,
Two sparks from the eternal forge,
  Two meteors in the sky.
Two dancers in a narrow ring,
  Two reeds to rest upon,
Two feathers of an eagle's wing—
  No, no—'tis only one.

One fragment of a solemn trust,
  One barque on death's black river,
One red leaf falling down to dust,
  One word before we sever.
Old year, a long and last good-night!
  Thou wert, but art not mine;
Hope points us to the New Year's light,
  And welcomes—'NINETY-NINE.

A SUMMER SONG.

Now the gay Summer unto us is come again, hearken, my love, in the bliss of it,
How the swift swallows that flit o'er the fallows are screaming to tell us the tale!
Come from thy bower, my languishing lady, and up from thy heart at the kiss of it,
Fair on thy cheek the red roses shall break, where the lily sits lowly and pale.

Sweet, O my love, was the pleasure that fell on us when to the fluty-toned tongue of her
Glad cuckoo, cheering our hearts from their fearing, we listened out in the green wood,
Under the beautiful rainbows that grew while unto us our merry hopes sung of her,
Blithe as young thrushes in green-growing bushes, glad tidings of forthcoming good.

Whet up thy sickle, O husbandman, weary with wondering where she was tarrying;
With you I listened to sorrows unchristened, a-saying to hope in my heart;
"She will not come till the time is far flown, when the corn should be ready for carrying;
Hence she will stay till the roses decay, and the leaves from the branches depart."

Forward to find her I sent a sad hope away, earnestly
seeking the light of her
Days that came beaming to me in my dreaming,
when baby-buds woke in their bow'rs;
All through the rain and among the drowned roses
she came, without seeing a sight of her;
Yet with her prime she is come in God's time to
this beautiful isle of ours.

Now unto us, O my love, she is hither; and for all
the hope we have had of her,
Sweeter than ever, and better than never, unto us
with pleasure elate
Must be her coming; for all she was sent to beneath
the blue heavens are glad of her;
So let us sing for the joy she must bring, and the
good she is here to create.

LONELY.

My love went over the sea,
To gather me golden store;
A robin sang carols of love to me,
On the boughs of a sycamore—
Sang on the sycamore bough,
Under the cloud above:
"Beautiful maid, be never afraid;
Spring will return thy love!"

A storm came out of the skies,
A wreck came up on the shore;
The beautiful bird that sang sweet lies
Is as my hope—no more!
The singer lies under the snow,
My joy lies under the wave;
My hope lies dead in a lonely bed,
And I am its living grave!

Nobody knows how dear
I hold him in my heart;
Nobody shares my grief severe
Since we were doomed to part.
Nobody weeps with me;
I sorrow and sigh alone,
Down by the pitiless sea,
To God in an undertone!

SONG.

Merry for us, my maid, the moon
  Above the land lies beaming;
Never for us, my love, too soon
  Its yellow rays are streaming;
For if there ever is a sweet hour
  When souls for souls are pining,
'Tis when the heavens are out in flower,
  And soft the moon is shining.

Merrily, in its bower of green,
  Hearken, my love, how sweetly
The night-bird singeth to its queen:
  Come hither, my love, and meet me!
Far better than all sweet time beside,
  To lips in kisses clinging,
Is the glad hour when to his bride
  The nightingale is singing!

THOUGHTS.

THE thoughts we deem our own are not all ours :
Whence that they come to us we cannot tell ;
Often, as butterflies o'er beds of flowers,
They flutter through our minds, and then farewell
Others there are that settle down and rest
Within our beings, as a bird in spring
That findeth a warm place to make its nest,
Till from the land the summer days take wing ;
Then even these will from their homes depart,
As faithless swallows when the wet winds blow
But I, O Love, have one within my heart
That, as a redbreast mid the falling snow,
To the dead flowers on the shrouded ground,
Singeth sweet song to me all the year round.

REMEMBRANCE.

THERE is a season of the year in which
The song sounds sweeter to my life, and this
Is when the cherries on the trees grow rich,
And sweet strawberries, to the star-king's kiss,
Grow ripe and mellow. Well I mind 'twas when
It was their time that I was wed, and to
My breast a bird flew in; and glad since then
I am that from my heart it does not go.
Dear bird of Hope, by Love so fondly fed,
Thou dost to-night make music in thy bower,
Full sweet as what I heard in time far fled,
When my heart opened as a passion flower,
And the bewildering beams of two bright eyes
Caught all my senses in a sweet surprise.

GIVING UP.

Oh, silent Earth,
And sorrowless man-mother, let me creep
Into thy bosom from this cruel dearth
Of Love, for which I weep!

Why should I live
Out of thy peaceful heart? Now love is dead,
Wailing for rest which thou alone canst give,
Let me come home to bed.

Trampled and torn,
Thy banner lies beneath the world-king's feet;
And I, O Love, have looked upon thy scorn
Till my death-thoughts grew sweet!

Why should I shrink
From what I have not seen, and shall not see?
When it is Death, I shall have ceased to think
Of all that Death may be!

Plant a sweet store
Of the dear flowers I loved in life above
My narrow bed, and on the chamber door
Write this: "He died for Love!"

Then go away,
And let me sleep into my rot. I never
Shall see Corruption, nor behold Decay.
Rest will be mine—unbroken and for ever!

SUNG IN MY AUTUMN.

Now it is Autumn! Ah! these are the hours
In which with sober thought I love to stray
Through the wild windings of a weirdy wood,
Mid the tall skeletons of stricken trees,
From which the dead leaves dangle o'er my head
Like shreds of shrivelled flesh. Is it because
My life is in its autumn that I feel
This strange affinity with things that say,
"O weary mortal, come with us along
Into our peaceful rest. We have, like you,
The spring and summer of our lives enjoyed;
And now, because it is our time to go,
We all must hasten home?" Is it not strange
That I should feel like this, and that my love
Of life should be so weak that I am found
Falling in love with Death? I do not feel
As one, oppressed with memories of sin,
In such condition should; but much as if
Some holy angel to the House of Peace
Did lead me by the hand.

A BIRTHDAY ODE.

Ah! so to me again this fourteenth day
Of rosy June is here, and with this song
Toward my future marching, here am I,
As a fleet runner in a ring, who gains
A point from which he started. Onward still,
More than half-weary grown, I run my course,
Wond'ring when 'twill end. Ah! there's a point
Of me ahead, in the highway of life,
Which may be near or distant, as God wills:
It is a place poor mortals call world's end,
Where the care-weary pilgrim may find rest,
For which, what man of men can tell me true
It is a sin to long?

I have not in the land lived to be old;
But the frail children of our mother Earth
Do at all times to their death-sleep drop down.
Babes from their bosoms; youth from its delight;
Maids from their love-dreams; bridegrooms from their brides;
Kings from their thrones, and beggars from their state,
Creep off to sleep when their set time arrives
In all the varied hours, while grey old age
Oft at the banquet bides. My grey-grown sire
Adown in Devon dwells; his numbered years
Are five and eighty. I, his absent boy,

Have, since my birth, on this fair flower-robed orb,
Around the sun rode three and fifty times,
And since the hour when I to toil begun,
More than ten thousand feet have trod to rags
The labour of my hands!

Often I wish that the great Lord of life
Had set me nobler work, with, for my task,
Wisdom to do it well. Ah! had I not,
'Twere better left undone. Great deeds demand
Greatness of strength, great courage, and sweet grace,
That will with patience come. I, after all,
To soothe my vexed ambition have this balm—
That, to the world in which I work and sing,
I am a thing of use. Is this not more
Than may with honest truth be said of all?
I would not change the comfort of that thought
For a great warrior's glory!

FAME.

FAME is the tinkle of a bell,
  Suspended in a crumbling tower,
Of a strange realm 'twixt heaven and hell,
  Where care has blighted every flower.
He that the steep ascent would climb,
To pull a peal must murder time;
For all the stairs are thick with stains
Of blood, and tears, and wasted brains.
Fame is not worth the hunter's pains
Until he dies, then eager friends
Will crown his ghost to make amends.

A SONG OF LIFE.

Let me in the battle fall,
  Fighting fair and honestly,
  For the good that is to be
Won or lost by one and all.

When my frame of strength is shorn,
  Feed me not with pauper's bread;
  Lay me down among the dead;
Save me from the eyes of Scorn.

All my hands can find to do,
  In the royal road of right,
  Let me do with all my might
Ere unto my rest I go.

When I have no task beside,
  I shall not my labour lose;
  If I bear a brother's cross,
Love for me will work provide.

If for her I only sing
  Hope unto the souls of men,
  God will bless my song, and then
I shall have my comforting.

FINIS.

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